

**Vol. IV, No. 1**

**FALL 1953**

# **CROSS**

**A QUARTERLY REVIEW**  
*to explore the implications  
of Christianity for our times*

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**PIEPER • GEISSMAN • PAREYSON**  
**THOMAS • DE HAAS • DUMAS • GUITTON**

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1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Cross Currents Corporation, 3111 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y.; Editors, Joseph Caulfield, Sally S. Cunneen, Alfred Di Lascia, Erwin Geissman and Leon King, all at 3111 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y.; Managing Editor, Joseph E. Cunneen, 3111 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y.; Business Manager, none.

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(My commission expires July 21, 1958)

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CROSS CURRENTS is published quarterly by Cross Currents Corporation, a non-profit membership corporation, at 3111 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y. Editorial communications should be addressed to Joseph E. Cunneen, Demarest, N. J. CLoster 5-0366J. The price is \$1. per issue, \$3 per yearly subscription. Canada \$3.50. Foreign \$4. Subscription Department, 3111 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y. UNiversity 5-4480. Copyright 1953 by Cross Currents Corporation. Printed in the U.S.A. by the Waldon Press, 203 Wooster St., New York 12, N. Y. Entered as Second Class Matter February 25, 1952, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

# An introduction to our fourth year of publication

## ALL IS GOOD

*Notes on the problem of intellectualism in the Catholic community*

**A**S SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS of the situation of the Catholic intellectual has been long overdue. The current wave of anti-intellectualism in the United States has called particular attention to the problem, but the problem is by no means new. The American temper has always been suspicious of the intellectual and the artistic, sometimes with an amused and condescending suspicion, sometimes with the ironic regard one might bestow on an old and useless mongrel which yet has certain claims of familiarity. This customary contempt gives way to outright hostility in periods of national insecurity and fear. When the rains fail it is a time-honored remedy to burn the witch doctor. The soft voice of the intellectual becomes symptomatic of latent evil when the public longs only for certainty and the assurance that the evil is being taken care of, that all will soon be well. The intellectual has no voice in the market when the crowd is enraptured by the shrill but positive noise of the demagogue. The rampant anti-intellectualism of the moment is not a specifically Catholic problem, although the Catholic intellectual shares the opprobrium of his non-Catholic fellows.

My present purpose is not to offer a solution to the problem, but rather to attempt an outline of the various elements which might profitably be studied in the effort to particularize the situation of the Catholic intellectual. I submit a vocabulary of terms and ideas as a starting point for future discussion.

The intellectual is not only an intelligent man. It is possible to be highly intelligent and yet not be an intellectual at all. The intellectual is a man of particular cast of mind. He need not in himself be a scholar or creative thinker, although by definition he will have a high respect for those who are. I would describe an intellectual as

- a man who has a wholesome respect for the human reason and a native skepticism toward ready-made solutions;
- a man who is willing to use his own reason in coming to grips with reality, and who is well aware that the process involves difficult and careful work; that intellectual solutions are not a reward for piety, virtue or patriotism;
- a man who has sufficient intellectual sophistication to know that few serious problems are simple problems; that the process of simplification which seems to make the problem clearer frequently leads away from rather than toward the truth;

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The following article is presented by way of editorial statement in introducing Vol. IV of CROSS CURRENTS. It is an adaptation of a lecture given recently by one of the editors at a Catholic theological conference in Montreal.

a man who realizes that no individual man can speak with genuine intellectual authority on very many subjects; that the price of authority includes, among other things, a long and arduous learning process and mental discipline which cannot be equated with, or measured by, honorific titles or university degrees.

Every intelligent honest man should be an intellectual at least to the extent that he cherish and foster the intellectual ideal. Certainly the aim of our schools and of our self-education should be to produce intellectuals of the sort I describe.

In theory at least the intellectual ideal will find few opponents in the Catholic community. But actually the operative proponents of the ideal are few in number and they are part of a social context which is markedly anti-intellectual in practice. We need a word here to identify the Catholic non-intellectual and I would suggest the term *simplist*. The simplist reduces all problems to the most simple terms and then discovers that they are no longer problems. He supposes that all issues can be resolved by a common-sense application of theological and moral formulas. Hence, in a sense there are no problems. He may not know the correct answer but there are those at hand who do, and the correct answer is the ideal solution—one, clear and Catholic. This myth is fostered by the clericalism of the Catholic community, an uniquely American failing for which the laity is largely at fault. It is a refusal on the part of the laity to accept its own responsibilities, to develop the potentialities of its own critical intelligence. The result is a willingness to accept the solutions without attempting to understand the problems they are supposed to solve, a pathetic determination to believe that anything said by a priest or printed in a Catholic publication has been subjected to rigorous intellectual examination by the most competent and orthodox Catholic authorities and hence is intellectually correct. Under these circumstances it would be a foolish and un-Catholic waste of time to look further. I do not mean, of course, that people actually reason in this way. But the disease is in the atmosphere of the Catholic community. Logically, since all the answers are so clear and so precise, there must be something very wrong with those who do not enthusiastically embrace them. How often do we find the Catholic writer or speaker offering the *one* answer and then turning to an excoriation of those who in ignorance or in bad faith presume to think otherwise? The simplist is against sin. Anyone who finds fault with his intellectual position obviously must be in favor of sin. The issue is as simple as that. But to the intellectual it can only be a sign of the magnificent variety of God's creation that anything so simple as the simplist can exist.

**W**HAT ACCOUNTS FOR THIS HOSTILITY toward the intellectual manifested by so many Catholics, oftentimes by prominent members of the Catholic community? Is it only a Catholic extension of the general American cultural atmosphere? It seems to be that some aspects of the situation are peculiar to the Catholic community. There is a certain abhorrence for problems which is characteristic of American Catholicism. It stems from an unarticulated desire to extend theological certitude over as wide an intellectual area as possible. The value of the act of faith is measured by range rather than by in-

tensity. The sequence seems to be: faith is good, therefore the more things I believe, the more perfect my faith. The interest centers on conclusions and not on the reasoning on which the conclusions are based. The argument is not examined for its validity; it is only appropriated for its apologetic usefulness in debate.

I have dwelled at some length on the simplist mentality because I believe that one of the most immediate problems confronting the Catholic intellectual is the necessity of learning to live peacefully in a community which is dominated by a mentality so alien to his own. The most obvious pitfall before him is the temptation to waste his time and his strength in attacking the simplist citadels. The resultant controversy would be fruitless. When the contestants insist on playing by different rules there is no game. The intellectual has his own standards: learning, logic, reasoning. The usual technique of the simplist is to reduce everything to simple terms, to see reality absolutely divided into good and evil, black and white, the Catholic and the adversary. Secure in his own intellectual orthodoxy he regards all who differ from him as the enemy. Now too often the intellectual in his understandable impatience tends to see the simplist as the enemy. When he does this, the intellectual himself has become simplist. The simplist's mentality is more the product of his virtues than of his vices. It has behind it a genuine devotion to everything it believes to be Catholic. The simplist begins with the quite reasonable belief that the solution to the world's problems lies in the acceptance of the word of God and in the extension of His Church to all men. In charity I believe that we must suppose that his ultimate hope is to promote the Kingdom of God and to help men to find salvation. His mistake lies in supposing that in a universe of contingencies the truth of every aspect of reality is quickly and easily isolable and that he has succeeded in isolating it. The reasoning here seems to be: The Catholic position is the true one; my position is Catholic; my position is the true one. We can meet today among our simplist brethren a descending hierarchy of Catholic positions: the Catholic position on the Trinity, the Catholic position on birth control, the Catholic position on education, the Catholic position on motion pictures, the Catholic position on Senator McCarthy. The simplist's definitions of both Catholic and position have to be extremely loose to fit his attitude. The intellectual's basic objection is not to the positions taken by the simplist, but rather to his determination to regard his positions as uniquely Catholic.

For the most part the simplist himself does little direct damage. His spokesman is the diocesan press but it is a grave (but not uncommon) error to suppose that he is a creation of that press. Catholic intellectuals sometimes speak as if the diocesan press was imposed on an unwilling Catholic community by an organized clerical-dominated minority. The truth is that the diocesan press expresses very well the tone of the Catholic community. It is what it is because the Catholic community is what it is. We get the press we deserve.

It is only occasionally that we see reason for suspecting that the situation may be even worse than it appears. Just recently a Catholic priest wrote the following as part of a plea for economic sanctions against recalcitrant motion picture exhibitors:

As Catholics, we know that it would be a sin to attend any motion picture which has received the condemnation of the National Legion of Decency, because we would thereby place ourselves in a proximate occasion of sin. (*Brooklyn Tablet*, 21 Nov. 1953, p. 6.)

If this is only an isolated case of appalling ignorance it would be a good individual example of the simplist mind. But the unpleasant suspicion lurks that there may be Catholic seminaries actually teaching such nonsense. That would not be amusing.

The real danger from the simplist is an indirect one. It lies in the temptation he presents to the intellectual, and especially to the young and serious-minded student.

## II

### T

HE INTELLECTUAL should constitute the balance and the maturity of the Catholic community. Rightly, much more is expected of him in the way of understanding and tolerance. The danger is that in his annoyance at the intellectual orthodoxy of the simplist, the intellectual will set up an orthodoxy of his own and relegate the simplist to heresy. Something like this has already begun to happen among Catholic intellectuals. Their positions are more tenable, but no more uniquely Catholic than those of the simplists. The assumption that the Catholic intellectual will necessarily hold certain opinions on politics and social problems is a regrettable one. It would be ironic if the final triumph of the simplist is his conversion of the intellectual to an essentially simplist position.

The problem of the student is especially difficult. Perhaps the most remarkable development in the Church of our time is the willingness of sizable numbers of young Catholic laymen to study Catholicism seriously and to be prepared to devote themselves to the cause of Christ and the Church. This situation is without precedent since Apostolic times. It will be the great scandal of the Church of our age if this tremendous treasury of enthusiasm and devotion is permitted to go to waste or to spend itself in misdirection. Yet just this is in process of happening. The students most worth our attention are the very ones who only too frequently find that the serious religious instruction they crave is nowhere available for them, that the Catholic college has no vital religious or liturgical life answerable to their needs. They go out into the world to waste themselves on eccentricities because at the center of the Catholic community they find neither sympathy nor welcome. Worst of all they lack the maturity to see the true complexity of the social problem, and too frequently they themselves grow suspicious and bitter. It is a savage irony that the very learning they acquire in a Catholic environment may serve to detach them from the Catholic community. The responsibility for this lies squarely with the educated simplists of the community. The serious-minded student who has been assured for years that there is something specifically Catholic about the simplist's positions is in for a rude awakening in any honestly administered Catholic college classroom. It is the Catholic intellectual who must swallow his pride and make charitable answer to the pathetic question, "Why have they lied to me all these years?" Do it he must, for his function is to build,

not to destroy. Petty feuding ought to be beneath the capabilities of the intellectual. The simplist is only wrong; the compromising intellectual is both wrong and in apostasy from his own principles.

### III

**T**HE INTELLECTUAL'S PASSION should be disciplined to the pursuit of truth. Here a particular word ought to be spoken for the Catholic scientist and scholar. A peculiarly Catholic temptation which he faces I would call "functionalism," the tendency to put the truth to work before it has been attained, the demand for apostolic results. It is a peculiarity of science and scholarship that they normally yield their fruits only when they are pursued for their own sake and on their own terms. To disclose reality in no matter how small a compass is itself a good work, for when reality appears undisguised it always shines fresh from the hand of God. For the Catholic scholar his true apostolate lies in his work, for he offers that, as he offers himself, to God.

Functionalism is a serious temptation because it is usually dressed in the highest moral and religious motives. The Catholic scholar who is deaf to such appeals and continues his professional work with patience, precision and exquisite care may seem to the simplist to be a victim of selfish and pagan perversity. Even his fellow intellectuals may find his pace pedestrian and his contribution to the good cause insignificant. But if he were to contribute nothing else, he is a practical demonstration of the intellectual methodology at its most disciplined and refined. This alone is worth preserving in a world where the simple and the easy solution has been granted status as a substitute for truth.

Those who seek the truth have the responsibility of giving testimony to the truth they have seen. In the eyes of the world the truth is not always pleasant to hear, nor is it often simple and clear. The true intellectual should not be much troubled by temptations to advertise himself and to preach daily in the marketplace. When his voice is needed he will know. When there is need he must speak firmly and fearlessly and give testimony to the truth that is in him. His crushing disgrace would be to hearken to the voice of false prudence at such a time. The simplists as usual will have gone before him and some of these will occupy great positions in the community. When it is time to stand up and be counted the intellectual must remember that office does not dignify folly and error. It is these that he must strive to replace.

**T**HE INTELLECTUAL IS ALWAYS a humanist, at least in the sense that that there are things to know; for what we know, is, and, what is, God has made. It is in order to know these good things better that the intellectual works and prays—works that he may know, and prays in constant gratitude that there are things to know, for what we know, is, and, what is, God has made. The Catholic intellectual says with St. Paul

*All is good that God has made, nothing is to be rejected; only we must be thankful to him when we partake of it, then it is hallowed for our use by God's blessing and the prayer which brings it.*

ERWIN W. GEISSMAN

# TOWARDS A REDEFINITION OF SECULAR HUMANISM

M. M. THOMAS

## *Entanglement and Disentanglement*

IT IS OFTEN SAID that the Church is too entangled with the world, that it has identified itself with East or West in the political struggle, that it has settled down in contemporary culture and made itself at home with national, racial and class ideologies, and that in repentance it should disentangle itself. This emphasis, coming in the modern period from European theology, has helped the Church to regain its independence from the old disintegrating order, and has set it on the road to seek

*M. M. Thomas of India was formerly a Secretary and Vice-President of the World Student Christian Federation and is now Secretary of its University Commission. This summary of a speech to the officers of the Federation was printed in its quarterly, THE STUDENT WORLD, 2nd Quarter, 1953.*

for the City whose builder and maker is God. But too often the advocates of disentanglement of the Church from the world do not go on to make clear that any withdrawal from the world must be made only in order that the Church may re-enter it with Christ. Too often in the recent past Christianity has become an appendage of a pagan movement of secular humanism, in which man's capacity for self-redemption has been affirmed. And it was right that a prophetic protest against this should arise in the Church itself. But the Christian in the world cannot live on protests; his life is a continual involvement in the secular world of nature and man. Unless the principles of a positive involvement are worked out, protest-theology can create a vacuum which may turn out to be as perilous as that unscrupulous involvement. The Christian doubtless needs to be constantly reminded that he is a pilgrim who should not settle down and make the world his home. But even a pilgrim needs to set up temporary tents along his way. The Christian opposition to pagan humanism should be in the name of a true humanism, I might even say a Christian humanism, in spite of the suspicion that phrase may arouse in the minds of some Christians.

## *The Gospel and Secular Faiths*

THE SIGNIFICANCE of the Second Report of the Commission on Christian Hope of the World Council of Churches is that it deals with precisely this question of the relation of the Gospel to the secular utopias of today. No ecumenical document has been more relevant to the situation we face in the world, and I hope it will be studied throughout the Federation. The Report takes up three secular ideologies which appeal to modern man, and places them in the light of the Christian Gospel: stalinism, scientific humanism and democratic utopianism. Let us look at the Commission's interpretation of the rise of these ideologies and of the reason for their perversion.

First, the Report says that all these ideologies "in some way bear witness to the great disturbance which God's revelation in Christ has made in the world," for "it is in part at least the ferment set up by its preaching and life which has brought these ferment in the world." In other words, the human aspirations which are basic to these various ideologies have their origin in the Christian revelation. The passion for social justice which underlies the origins of stalinism, the search for rational truth which is basic to scientific humanism, and the principles of human individuality and social equality which lie behind democratic utopianism—all these have their roots in the Christian understanding of man and the world.

Secondly, the Report answers the question: why have they betrayed their original humanitarian purposes? We know that stalinism has destroyed the social revolution in the process of making it and has become a new form of social oppression. Scientific humanism has produced techniques of engineering natural and social forces which serve to destroy human values. Democratic utopianism, with its faith in the "freedom of the individual," has destroyed mutual responsibility and the values of individuality and equality. Why this betrayal? Why has humanism in many parts of the world turned into its opposite? The Report answers: because humanism came to be separated from its original Christian roots. "... in our day, in one way or another, these various aspirations have escaped the setting and discipline of the gospel of Jesus Christ, wherein alone they can be espoused without the most terrible perversion." Outside the Christian setting, men use these movements to "assume a status and a posture under the sun which does not belong to them" and thus "destroy their very manhood and that of their fellows."

In this context we must ask: where do we see the results of man's rebellion against God in stalinism, scientific humanism and democratic utopianism? What is it that corrupts, perverts and finally destroys the human aspirations which find expression in the secular humanist movements of our time. To this we may answer: utopianism. It has two results:

1. *Self-righteousness.* St. Paul in Romans 7 speaks of the impossibility of man doing the good he would: he intends to love his neighbor, but he does just the opposite. Love as an ideal or law is impossible of fulfilment, because it cannot be commanded to appear. What we ought to do, we cannot. Utopianism overlooks the contradiction at the core of moral idealisms. Believing in the capacity of ideals to achieve what they intend, modern humanism embarks on its program of moral and social uplift as a "holy crusade," and in so doing falls into a ruthless self-righteousness. History is full of instances of men entering upon holy moral and political crusades and turning into Grand Inquisitors. Nicolas Berdyaev has said that it was in seeking to create an inner communion of men (communism) that stalinism entered upon the path of tyranny. The belief that it is possible through political action to achieve a final harmony in society invests communism with a self-righteousness that turns the party into one of tyrants. If American youth were a little more suspicious of their own idealism, we in Asia would feel much safer, for the self-righteousness associated with the American way of life and expressed today in an anti-communist crusade may unconsciously end in an American imperialism extending throughout the world.

2. *Belief in history.* Utopianism conceives the end of history as within history itself; it looks to a future society within the historical process as the final goal towards which all history is moving. It therefore says at every turn, "History will judge," "What succeeds is right." If man knows no judgment other than that of the future, he will be concerned to create a future generation that will judge him to be right. The anxiety for success becomes a moral necessity for the man who wants to justify himself before the bar of history, and his search for power to control the future in order to vindicate his present decisions, makes him inhuman. This is the secret of much of the ruthlessness behind the revolutions of our time, whether democratic or stalinist.

Thirdly, the Commission Report frankly admits the share of the Church in the apostasy of humanism from its true Christian setting and the resulting disaster. The Report says of the Church: "Its own understanding of its message has been too restricted, too cribbed and cabined to the confines of a passing piety, to enable it to keep these fermentations within the compass of that by which alone they can be judged and hallowed... By its failure to measure its vision by the dimensions of the gospel, the height, the breadth and the depth of the love of God for man in the flesh of Jesus Christ, it has allowed the aspirations of humanity to serve the purpose of hell rather than the glory of God."

#### *The Whole Gospel*

**T**HE NEED IS THEREFORE for the Church to repent of its one-sided understanding of the Gospel of Christ and to recapture it in its wholeness, as affirming everything truly human in the redemption it offers to mankind. If utopianism, with its easy path to self-righteousness and its fear of the future, is the source of corruption in modern movements of humanism, there is need for the Church to understand afresh and to proclaim to the world the Gospel of the crucified and risen Lord as the only basis for a true humanism. Two elements of the Gospel need special emphasis in this connection:

1. *The New Age beyond the end of history.* What is our theological starting point? I remember a speech by the late A. M. Verkey of Alwaye College, Travancore. "Do you realize," he asked in the course of an address to a student audience, "the tremendous implications of our declaration of faith in the physical resurrection of Christ, the revolutionary significance of the fact that the tomb was empty?" It came as something surprisingly new to me. Like many others, I had come to Christ in the traditions of pure spirituality and individual piety. I do not regret that tradition. But here was a challenge to its one-sidedness. If Christ rose in the body, the redemption He wrought was not merely of my spirit or soul, but of the whole of me, body, mind and soul, and of the whole of my relationship to nature and to men.

In the Nicene Creed, we declare our faith: "And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: whose kingdom shall have no end." These are affirmations, not only about Christ, but also about the secular world and human his-

tory. They declare that the whole creation has been reconciled to God in Christ, that He rules, and that He will come again in glory to consummate His Kingdom. This drama of Christ's resurrection, His present rule and His second coming takes place beyond the end of history—for history ends with death—and points to a New Age, which is the goal of "the whole created world," the cosmos. It gives a final point of reference and meaning for history.

The whole world does not see this truth about itself. But a part of it does: the Church is that part of the world which knows the nature and historical destiny of the whole world. The Church lives acknowledging Christ's redemption and His rule over the secular world and human history, and lives to proclaim it among men, both by word and deed. As the World Council Commission Report says, the New Age beyond the end of history is "the final redemption of both the Church and the 'whole created world'—at once judgment, transformation and fulfilment."

2. *The power of the Cross.* There is only one place at which the self-righteousness of the good man and the holy crusader can break: at the Cross of Jesus Christ, where every man sees himself as a murderer of the Son of God, and knows himself forgiven by Him. This doctrine of justification by faith is the only ultimate basis for true community. Jesus told a story to illustrate this. Two men went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee thanked God because he was not like the publican. He divided mankind into the moral and immoral, the holy and the unholy. Jesus said that this is not the way man achieves manhood. The Pharisee returned home more self-centered and more incapable of loving his neighbor than before. But the publican beat his breast and prayed, "O Lord, have mercy upon me a miserable sinner"; and Christ said he went home a righteous man, that is, having right relations with God and his neighbor. True human community is the community of forgiven sinners. Love has ceased to be a law or an ideal; in grateful response to the forgiveness of Christ through His death, it becomes a spontaneous fact. True community has become a possibility because a new motive—gratitude—has taken the place of the old self-defeating motive of duty. It is necessary to emphasize that justification by faith leads spontaneously to good works, that the experience of forgiveness is an experience of the power of the New Age here and now, of the "this-sidedness" of the resurrection.

It is, however, not enough to emphasize the purely personal aspect of the power of sanctification, and to leave society and politics outside it. There was a time when I thought that the New Age of Christ was so much beyond history that it could be experienced in politics only as forgiveness and not as power, that political philosophy could be only a philosophy of sinful necessities where the Cross was relevant only as forgiveness to the politician, and not as qualifying politics, political parties, techniques and institutions as such. That is to say, the power of the Cross was considered as "beyond politics." No doubt, when the depth of sin in the collective life of man is realized, it is natural to speak of "moral man and immoral society." But certain questions remained with me: Can Christ only judge politics? Can He not also in some measure redeem it here and now? Cannot forgiveness be realized as power in the structures of the collective and institutional life of man in society? Cer-

tainly there will be a gulf between a politics of justice and the life of charity until Christ comes, and there may be times when politics becomes so terribly perverted that the tension between the two is extremely tragic. But I believe that it is possible for politics itself to be redeemed from its extreme perversions and be made more or less human, if it recognizes and receives into itself the power of the Gospel. This emphasis on the redemption of the secular collective life of man through the power of the Cross is lacking in the World Council Commission Report.

*Redefinition of Secular Humanism*

**T**HE COMMISSION, after presenting its theological affirmations and its diagnosis of the reason for the failure of pagan humanism, goes on to consider the positive Christian task in this situation. At this point, however, one gets the feeling that the ultimate Christian hope is presented as a substitute for or an alternative to the provisional human hopes and aspirations expressed in the secular humanist utopias of our time. It is certainly not that. Christianity is not an alternative for social revolution, or science, or democracy, and we certainly need movements and ideologies to affirm the values of social, political and economic justice, and of rational scientific pursuits, and to build up liberal secular democratic states based on the fundamental rights of the human person. There is an attempt to run away from such movements and ideologies in the Commission's Report. This is understandable in Europe which has come to the end of the Renaissance and the Reformation. But in other parts of the world, such as Asia, we are only at the beginning of the Renaissance. Here socialism, nationalism and democracy denote forces that speak to man of liberation. In such situations the Christian task is not to fight shy of humanist ideologies and movements, but to present the faith, love and hope of the Gospel of Christ as the power which can redeem them from their "most terrible perversion" and re-establish them in such a way that they do not betray, but realize, their true human ends. Our opposition to pagan nationalism is not primarily because it rebels against Christ, but because in so rebelling it betrays the values it seeks to achieve for man. We present Christ as the basis on which nationalism can be redefined and a truly national movement can take shape. So also with democracy. The Bangkok conference of East Asian church leaders said that democracy was weak and tended to break down in Asia because it was separated from its Christian roots, and that the Christian task was to "redefine, revitalize and reinforce" the democratic forces and values in the light of the Christian faith, so that they may endure. Bangkok also felt that "a true social democratic" revolution might be the answer to stalinism. All this may sound irrelevant to Europe, but it is not necessarily so to Asia. And the only plea one can make in this connection to the World Council Commission is that it not be guided entirely by the Continental European situation in its formulation of the positive Christian tasks *vis-à-vis* stalinism, scientific humanism and democratic utopianism. In Asia at least, Christians certainly have a more positive task in relation to the forces and ideologies of socialism, science and democracy. And only if Christians are prepared to enter into the task of redefinition of the dynamic, modern, ideological and political

movements of our time, can the relevance of the Gospel be made clear to modern pagans, who deify man and use his hopes to enhance their own self-righteousness and to show forth their mastery over their own destiny. Christians, called as Christians to fight for socialism, science and democracy, are the people in Asia who will best witness to the power of Christ to redeem the "multitude of hopes for man in his temporal history and temporal concerns." *Ecce homo* will be intelligible only in the context of such a Christian witness in the world.

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# LEIBNIZ AND PASCAL: PROTESTANTISM, CATHOLICISM AND ECUMENICISM

JEAN GUITTON

*Pascal, Leibniz, and the division of Christianity*

PASCAL AND LEIBNIZ contribute, though in different degrees, to the religious crisis begun in the sixteenth century by the Protestant Revolt, but they are located in opposing religious groups; one belongs to the Church governed from Rome; the other is a Lutheran.

In neither case was there a mere formal allegiance. They had, each of them, faced the possibility of deviation from his own orthodoxy; each had posed to himself the most serious question for a Christian: *Can I be saved where I am?* Pascal had been tempted to leave the visible communion of the Roman Church; yet, after his fill of troubles, he would not permit himself this defection. On the other hand, Leibniz had pressure put on him by princes, bishops, and friends to enter the body of the Catholic Church; he had never yielded and, it seems that the older he grew, the less inclined he was to do this. Finally, it is well to keep in mind that, whereas Leibniz all his life had set before him the problem of union between the Churches, Pascal, in his quarrels over Jansenism, had been brought round to examine unity within the Church.

When a philosophy of history considers the division within Christianity, it is led to question itself on the part played by the development of thought in effecting that division.

Were the causes of the break only some that stemmed from the conditions of the times and which were extrinsic to religion, such as the state of the Church with the problems inherent in reforming a 1,600-year-old organization, or such as occur at the conjunction of a new culture with the rise of nationalism? Or would it be better to probe the sixteenth century Reformation for more fundamental reasons which point to divergence of opinion on the very essence of Christianity? Should it be held that the constitutive elements of the religion of Jesus Christ—faith, good works, the sacraments, the priesthood, the concept of corporation and union—had not received their authentic interpretation before the advent of Luther and Calvin? If Leibniz and Pascal are examined side by side, it would help us to explore these problems. It is a common characteristic of these two geniuses never to have allowed mental cleavage in their activities, no matter how disparate; for each, faith, fructified by thought, formed with it a unitary system. This fact will perhaps be an advantage in enabling

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us to discern what is the basic metaphysic which characterizes Catholicism and Protestantism and determines their opposition...

A striking coincidence, perhaps not by pure chance, puts a sharp edge on the comparison. It is the fact that each of the two cultivated in himself the quality appropriate to the other, and he did so, not unconsciously and intermittently, but deliberately and steadily over a long period of time. Leibniz is a Protestant with a Catholic mind and one who never ceased wishing himself Catholic. Pascal is a Catholic who, by his sympathies with Jansenism (that domestic Reformation within the Church), shows his affinity to the Protestant spirit. This resemblance in the two men by the common quality of dissymmetry in character is valuable in working out the comparison. It can teach us to discriminate more finely between minds and mentalities. Especially it can throw light on certain persistent factors in the problem of divergent forms of Christianity.

#### *The Typology of Protestantism and Catholicism*

**L**ET US BEGIN by sketching in broad outline what seems the most salient distinction between the Protestant type of thinking and the Catholic type of thinking, always taking into account the fact that in each religious division there can be temperaments akin to those of the other group.

Protestant thought is basically *existential*; it considers man here and now, as he is in his present state. And, though it ranks God above all nature and though it seems to be concerned only with His glory, nevertheless, it is pre-occupied with the drama of the justification of sinful man much more than with God glorified in His works. This anthropocentric note seems missing in Calvin who, in everything, seeks the glory of God. But the "glory" about which he thinks and which he achieves is not the universal glory (that which is resplendent in the divine mystery and in creation); it is the glory which God renders Himself through the predestination of men in Jesus Christ; glory is understood as the consequences of their salvation. We would not wish to imply here that these aspects are omitted in a Catholic line of thought but, rather, that they are subordinated to an aspect more properly *religious*, in the technical use of the term religion. In this context man is related to God as to His creator before he is related to Him as to his savior. The virtue of "religion," according to Saint Thomas, is not primarily a virtue helpful towards our salvation, but a virtue of justice towards God, *potissima pars justitiae*.<sup>1</sup> God has some rights over us which have priority over our personal needs; our claims on God are not strict claims. This fact explains one of the essential attributes of the Catholic religion: without resorting to idolatry, it satisfies the natural tendency of the mind to worship. Protestantism, belittling this side of religion through which Catholicism, while purifying it, maintains a continuity with the religion of primitive men and with ancient tradition, tends to restrict the virtue of piety to some intimate relations of the soul with God, of sinners with their Redeemer. That is why, generally speaking, in Protestant localities, there is no cathedral, no liturgical function, no religious order, no contemplative life of praise. Instead, first place is assigned to feeling, the emotional assurance of the inner drama of the soul, before God alone.

*The Protestant in Pascal and the Catholic in Leibniz*

**I**F THIS ANTITHESIS is correct, there is no need for further delay. It is Pascal who is the Protestant type and Leibniz who is the Catholic type.

Thus, Pascal, as E. Baudin pointed out recently, is opposed to that theocentric concept of the universe which had been that of the ancients and the men of the Middle Ages. He is absorbed to the exclusion of all else with the interior man; he draws up a balance sheet of what he loses or gains by his conduct. Pascal does not seek God in physical nature but rather in the human heart. He experiences God less by His sensible presence than by his own hunger for God. He does not grant the existence of *natural* reason, of an *eternal* law of morality: if there had been no Revelation, the sensible thing would have been for us to become libertines and give ourselves up to pleasure.

This way of sizing up the situation ends by identifying morality and faith, contrary to the teaching of the ancients who saw in moral action the functioning of reason and nature. It is understandable that Pascal should also condemn science, the arts, philosophy as vanities. For him, deism is almost as remote from the Catholic religion as atheism. He says:

All those who seek God outside Jesus Christ and who stop at nature, either do not find any ray of light which is satisfactory or they reach the point where they fashion for themselves some means of knowing and serving God without a mediator and, because of this, fall into either atheism or deism which are two things the Christian religion abhors almost equally.<sup>2</sup>

Frequently God remains for Pascal the jealous God of the Old Testament who enlightens and blinds; for him love of God and self-hatred are correlatives.

It is evident that Pascal is always going beyond himself, that the breadth, depth, even the driving force of his genius warrants the effort to see him in a less gloomy light without denying the facts—as several commentators of our own day have tried to do. But, taken in their obvious meaning, Pascal's statements are as opposed to Salesian humanism as to Thomistic realism, through which the tradition of Catholicism is authentically expressed. If Pascal the scholar is a friend of reason, of nature, of being, Pascal the Christian seems to attempt the establishment of faith on the ruins of that which he has up to the moment taken for granted. It can be said that there is a blackout of the Catholic mind by the interposition of the Jansenistic mentality.

Leibniz, even though he was born under the Confession of Augsburg, does not seem to have been deeply affected by the Lutheran spirit. This can probably be accounted for by the fact that his faith was quite dispassionate, that he enrolled very early in the school of the ancient philosophers, that the atmosphere of the courts of Europe had opened his mind to the traffic of the world where the dark side of life masks under outward show, and, finally, because sin and salvation never presented themselves as problems to him. Leibniz represents very well what the human mind would have been like if the suture between the "science" of the moderns and the "reason" of the ancients could have been made evenly without the intervention and startling appearance of Christ. This temper of mind gives him kinship with the spirit of medieval philosophy as

far as that spirit tried to integrate the ancient heritage with dogma, and where it drew from dogma all the knowledge and understanding contained therein. For some time we have failed to recognize the modernity of the Middle Ages which remained hidden to the centuries which immediately followed even though they were Christian. Comte and Leibniz are the only ones who had a presentiment of what we know now when they took their stand, each in his own way, on an *a priori* notion, that of continuity. Although Leibniz, like the modern mind, has an overwhelming desire for personal happiness, he maintains Aristotle's and Saint Thomas' option for the good and perfection. It is not individual salvation that he puts as the purpose of human effort but conformity to order, to the "General Good," to the "Universal Good." In the same trend, he admires the physical universe which offers us the marvels of divine wisdom; he sets out to analyze the substances of which it is composed in order to realize in what capacity they can serve for our maintenance and even for our greater perfection. The arts should be cultivated, especially music, that beautiful activity which gives a certain elevation to the soul by paraphrasing the pre-established harmony of the universe which God has put into the world. Everything serves us to know God the more and to increase in some way His glory. Nothing is to be depreciated but everything is to be loved and to be referred to God.<sup>3</sup> By all these points Leibniz seems closer to the root-idea of the Christian religion which is, as Saint Paul says, *to restore all things in Christ*. There exists in Leibniz an appreciation of what God has made because everything that He made redounds to His glory.

**L**ET US NOW CONSIDER those dogmas which both Pascal and Leibniz thoroughly studied. Here again we shall find them associated by mutual opposition.

It is extraordinary that the dogmas which Malebranche labelled as metaphysical experiences should have served Pascal as well as Leibniz in the development of his philosophy. But the manner is not precisely the same for each. Pascal used the dogmas to enlighten him on facts otherwise inaccessible to him —the origin of man, the Real Presence in the Eucharist, the reality of grace, the nature of Jesus Christ. Leibniz also used the same dogmas but with the purpose of finding in dogma confirmation of those points which he had established without recourse to dogma. More subtly, Leibniz was wont to use dogmas as symbols of rational truths which he could not clearly demonstrate, following the method of the neoplatonist who availed himself of the myths interspersed throughout the *Dialogues*.

The *Theodicy*, the crowning work of Leibniz's life,<sup>4</sup> is, in the last analysis, a translation of Lutheran predestination into the language of rationalism, just as *The Critique of Pure Reason* would be in a later day. Age comes back with groping gesture for the intuitions of early youth and defends them in another light.

Meditation on transubstantiation seems to have been one of Leibniz's most constant preoccupations whether at the beginning of his career as a thinker

or at its end. It is surprising that he shows so much interest in a doctrine which he did not believe. But it will be noticed that, at least in the beginning and when he studied it in 1671, his objective was to demonstrate that, between the *consubstantiation* of the Lutherans and the *transubstantiation* of the Catholics, there was no metaphysical difference and, consequently, the latter must be accepted, clearly seeming to him a better developed idea, at least technically. Later he sees in the *vinculum* theory, which he suggested to des Brosses, an accordance of his system with dogma rather than a proof of dogma by its agreement with his system. But, in both cases, dogma furnished him an example, the only one of its kind, that of *experimentum crucis*, which illustrated that what his system had conceived as logically separable, had, according to Catholic belief, been *actually* separated; that a substance which is unextended under one aspect may be known under another aspect by the accidents inherent in extension.<sup>5</sup>

It is surprising enough that Leibniz was led to consider the dogmas which are most Catholic and to defend them at length in his system. It can be noticed also that, following the same slant, he was more interested in the consideration of the Incarnation than that of the Redemption. It was the *opus Dei* more than the *salus hominum* that held him. It is this that he calls "the glory of God," and he teaches that it is not to be looked for in the sphere of happiness. The prosperity of men does not enter into nature's plan except as a sort of divine favor. The happiness of all reasonable creatures is one of the ends that God envisages but it is not the whole purpose nor even the final end of nature.<sup>6</sup> And men are rated not so much according to objective excellence as according to the way they fit into the divine plan. The world is not *for us* but *at our disposal*, provided we behave. Thus the plan of God is ordained towards God and the grasp of this fact is the source of peace. It is impossible to go farther in expressing theocentrism.

So it turns out that Pascal was often aroused by those doctrines he found held in common by Catholics and Protestants while Leibniz drew light from those dogmas which are most specifically Catholic. Here again will be seen an example of that strange inversion which allows a mind to realise itself better by what is naturally alien to it. The probable explanation is that only the successful contest with an adversary gives the stamp of objectivity to a strong inspiration which we receive when working independently.

#### *Leibniz' Friendship for the Jesuits*

**T**HIS IS THE PROPER PLACE to consider another Catholic temperament trait found in Leibniz, lasting friendship for the Jesuits. No other Protestant scholar has more thoroughly analyzed the spirit of the Society of Jesus; no other has shown a closer affinity to the Jesuit spirit; no other has pleaded so well the cause of the Jesuits who are always on trial. On certain points he understood them better than they, at the time, understood themselves. He was faithful to his policy of helping others to be faithful to the fullest expression of their own essential character; he went so far as to suggest to them means for outdoing themselves along their own line. So, if a reformer of the famous

Society should one day feel the need to renew it according to type, he would find in this sympathetic outside observer some very useful directives.

In this, Leibniz is quite different from Pascal. Though Pascal knew the Jesuits over such a long period of time, he never saw beneath the surface; he was very early involved in polemics; he viewed the great organization from one angle only. If he is supposed to have characterised the Jesuit, it is as Molière would have done, with the techniques of the comedy-writer who describes a type and who arranges the action in order to arouse laughter. Pascal believed that he had discerned in the Jesuit spirit the subtlest corruption of the Christian spirit, charity diverted from its end and betrayed into justifications of evil—in a word, the sin against the spirit which cannot be forgiven. Therefore, his arguments against "jesuitism" resemble those which Protestants use against Romanism, but with this difference: Pascal is a Catholic and he is spotting the enemy device within the walls of Troy.

It is just the opposite with Leibniz. The Jesuit institution, far from representing in his eyes the most perfidious opposition to the true Christian spirit and the mentality of the Early Church, is the most remarkable development of this primitive Christianity. The faults of the Society, as serious as they are, are extrinsic. Intrinsically the order is sound. And, if this order had been reformed along the lines of its essential character, it could have procured for the Apostolate means of an expansion which meet modern requirements in its double mission, interior and exterior.<sup>7</sup>

Several of the great philosophies of life have been fulfilled in the concrete by the inspiration and establishment of an organized community where the founder perpetuated his life-work and where his work could be renewed in a surer manner than by his influence, which would necessarily be less constant. This type of projection is seen in the case of Plato and again in the nineteenth century with Comte. If the philosopher goes the whole way of his vision, he finds an *order* or the equivalent of an order. Pascal had such an "order" at Port Royal. So, even if it casts a cloud over Pascal's reputation and circumscribes him, Port Royal has preserved his memory, as did the survival of Port Royal in the French University of the nineteenth century which was under Jansenistic control. In the same way, Kant survived in the German University until he could be adopted by the French University after our military defeats. But it was only from afar that Port Royal and the University copied religious orders.

Leibniz had carefully analyzed the concept of *religious order*. He had worked out the conditions of the perfect adaptation of these orders to their end which, in his eyes, was the most efficacious realization of the Divine Plan. Leibniz's plan was to keep what was best in each existing order, then to incorporate these best elements into a more comprehensive Order. At the same time, each of the existing orders (at least those which were long established) was to profit by the current spirit which was a spirit of reason and science. Leibniz dreamed of a Church where the Cistercians would be *also* naturalists, where the mendicant orders were *also* physicians, the contemplatives *also* mathematicians, the learned orders *also* historians, the missionaries *also* linguists, the theologians *also*

critics, the liturgists also lovers of nature and its cycles. Leibniz feared that, with religious, all powers of observation were confined to their liturgical and pastoral duties in the narrow grooves understood as proper to those offices before the dawn of the scientific age. Leibniz hoped that the findings of science "would be no less understood than others in apostolic activities." "It is not required," he wrote to Père Jergus, "that they spend their whole time in the confessional or thinking out sermons and cases of conscience." Leibniz would advise a division of labor, one contingent setting out on the Propagation of faith by missions, the other on the Justification of faith through science. He was even scheming, it was said, to combine *the orders* into *one Supreme Order*, a super-Order, the order of Charity: *Instituatur Societas sive ordo caritatis, compositus ex contemplativis et activis*; and from this order the pope would be chosen.<sup>8</sup>

It was Leibniz' methodology, so different from that of Descartes, not to innovate but to adapt what was at hand, limiting his handiwork to grafting cuttings into his own stock. Leibniz saw in the Jesuit Order the religious organization closest to that which he would have founded himself. He, too, was preoccupied with the "glory of God." Since the Jesuits were already established, it was not necessary to start at scratch, a precious saving of energy! All that he had to do was to add the finishing touch to the work of Ignatius and his first companions or carry it forward by introducing, as in infinitesimal calculus, that *minute differential* which would make the actual endowment move on towards its maximum limit, towards its perfection. Leibniz said that he wanted to pick up the Jesuit potential at the point where that potential had halted: "*Alda anfangen wo die Jesuiten aufhören.*"<sup>9</sup>

Two objectives sum up this Leibnizian Jesuitism: a more thoroughgoing devotedness to the glory of God and the salvation of souls—to the glory of God by the advancement of scientific studies, to the salvation of souls by a more planned adaptation of apostolic means to their end.

Leibniz was keenly aware of the change in the spirit of his age taking place under an apparent stability. There where Bossuet had once been dictator, a spirit diametrically opposed to Bossuet was beginning to break through. And, in this new mentality, the application of reason to nature was going to replace the older theology which had been, for the most part, an application of reason to grace. It is true that Pascal had praised the progress of the sciences; he saw modern techniques as really ancient because the findings are cumulative. But Pascal, who was not conscious of structural mutations, had not perceived that the progress of science, once the human mind should have clearly grasped its law, would effect changes in men's thoughts about traditional religion and would shake the social order to its very foundations. For him, the libertine is the "free-thinker," a man at personal enmity with God—not the philosopher, nor the scholar, nor the intellectual, nor the social reformer. Ten years pass (a short interval) and Leibniz, more alert than Pascal to rising movements, emphasizes those imminent changes which are to launch the human mind into a new era. In 1671 he writes in a letter to Arnauld:

Today's most crying need is a very profound knowledge of religion. Why? Because a philosophical age is opening where, in the natural and logical course of events, insistence on absolute accuracy in detail is going to spread from the classrooms out into every walk of life. If we cannot satisfy this demand for exact knowledge, the genuine propagation of religion must be abandoned. Very soon the majority of men will be Christian only in externals; enterprising persons with bad spirit will work for the destruction of the faith. Atheism with naturalism will be popular heresies.

This is the reason why Leibniz wished that religious minds, on every level of intelligence and in every condition of life, should be enlightened and that the study of science should be released from the disreputable position which false asceticism has assigned it. In all this he was decidedly different from Pascal who in the last years of life renounced the use of his talents so that charity might have full sway.

Leibniz called attention to the fact that

Although an individual person could be saved and live an honest life without knowledge of rabbinical lore or history or mathematics, nevertheless, it matters much to the common weal that there should be men each of whom cultivates those branches of learning for which he has talent... Because everyone knows that, far from preventing the practice of Christian virtues, these studies serve (though some more directly than others) to the great end which we must propose to ourselves.<sup>10</sup>

Here Pascal could have raised the objection that the study of the sciences cannot help towards salvation until after the purification of the heart. Thus Saint John of the Cross, after the trials of the mystical night, allows the soul stripped of self the use of good things, even sensible goods; man, having renounced self, is now able to sublimate all things. Leibniz, on the contrary, seems to think that the study of science has in itself the power to elevate the soul, that on its own title it gives to God His glory, so much so that it could become an equivalent or substitute for religion. Leibniz would be quick to say that science and piety, knowledge and prayer, are one and the same act translated into different tongues. Under these conditions, technical efficiency becomes as important as ascetical worth. There are even cases where this efficiency can be more useful for a divine undertaking because art is less vague than love. Leibniz endeavored to unite the spirit of Ignatius with that of Spinoza, the inspiration of the *Exercises* with that of the *Ethics*. A sentence from a letter of Leibniz to Colbert may be quoted as a striking example of the proposed back-door entry: "A Chinese mandarin will be carried with admiration once he has witnessed the infallibility of the missionary geometrician."<sup>11</sup>

Pascal was shocked by this approach. Yet, when he had put forward the problem of the cycloid as an opportunity of displaying his talents in the service of this creed, he had followed a line of conduct which Leibniz criticized, observing that such challenges cut both ways, and the fact that Wallis in England and Laloubère in France had already managed to solve the problem, caused "some damage to Pascal."<sup>12</sup> This time it is Leibniz who attacks mission-style geometry.

*The Jesuit Spirit and Leibniz' Casuistry*

**I**T WOULD BE VERY INTERESTING to follow out this contrast of the Jesuit type with the Jansenistic type! It would throw light on the mystery enshrouding several minds, especially in France where the University still suffers from the division: Jesuit in its origin, its methods and its secularized Christianity, it remains engrafted onto Jansenism since the nineteenth century.

Joubert's commentary on the subject is perfectly apposite:

The Jansenists like the rule better than the good; the Jesuits prefer the good to the rule. The first is more essentially learned; the second more essentially pious. "Go to the good by every way," seemed the device of the one; "Observe the rule at any price," was the motto of the other.

And Joubert adds:

The first of these maxims (that of the Jesuits) can be given to all men; it will never lead them astray. The second one should be practiced at times but it can never be given as a directive. Men of sound judgment and much experience are the only ones who could not abuse it.

Then Joubert goes on to say that the Jansenists diminish the great favor of creation to increase the great favor of redemption; they take something from the Father to give it to the Son.<sup>18</sup>

That Leibniz drank deep of the Jesuit spirit in its healthy as well as its tainted sources, that he was more of the "Jesuit type" than any Jesuit who ever lived, we are quite ready to believe because the Catholic Church checks the types and characters under her control from going the full length of their propensities; she obliges them to compound their ways with other types and characters; she holds them in the current of her universal life. There is in the Church a Jesuit way of thinking just as there is a Jansenistic. But Jansenism itself exists only outside the Church. It may be asked why there has never been Jesuitism in the sense that there has been Jansenism. Leibniz portrays exactly the type of thinking which, if it had formed a school, would have become in the Roman Catholic Church this "Jesuitism" because he carried to their ultimate conclusions notions peculiar to the Jesuits but which were not carried by them to their full development, so "Jesuitism" did not see the light of day.

If assets and liabilities are to be calculated, the score would show that by this mental twist Leibniz gained more than he lost and for the very reasons which Joubert enumerated. The idea of the Good, that of creation, even that of the glory of God, are norms for sound and balanced thinking. When they are removed or chiseled down, doubtful conclusions quickly manifest themselves. For example, if, in place of the Good, the focus is on Form or the Rule (if, instead of what is good in itself, the focus is rather on what is good for us), it is difficult not to give priority to one's own individual perfection over Perfection itself. In the same way, when concentration on the Redemption bypasses the Incarnation and Creation (the act of *restauratio* from then on obscuring the act of *instauratio*), evil tends to take substantial form and it becomes difficult to avoid underestimating the value of the world and of self. Pascal lacked that virtue of *philautia* (self-esteem) which Spinoza praised.

The most characteristic Jesuit trait, the one for which the Society is often reproached, is to have developed to the highest degree that spirit of "bargaining" and of "compromise" which had been that of the Fathers of the Early Church in their dealings with the Graeco-Roman world.

The problem of the wise man's conduct of himself in the midst of the world had already been touched on by the Stoics; it is a problem that reappears in every age. We do not live in a society of uniformly perfect beings but in the midst of a conglomerate universe where the good mingles with the bad. The spirit of Christianity, like that of all practical systems of ethics, has always felt the pull of two tendencies—the one, forthright and intransigent, which hurls men out of the world "to which they do not belong"; the other, charitable and tolerant and compromising, which aims to please. The Jesuit spirit follows the second line. The mistake of certain Jesuit priests in the sixteenth century was to work out a mathematics of compromise and to reduce to a system this "ethics of judgment which cannot be formulated in rules." Pascal, much as he used arguments of probability (without acknowledging the fact) in his *Apologia*, shrank from probability in moral questions: horror conditions one to caricature what one hates. Leibniz was better informed on these points, more balanced, also more practical. He regretted with Pascal that certain Jesuits, like Père Fabri, should have undertaken "to uphold this ludicrous ethic of probability and these frivolities unknown to the Early Church and rejected even by the pagans." But Leibniz did not like to see pamphlets used to run down the reputation of religious orders, especially the Jesuits, who "live exemplary lives, cultivate the studies, and are excellent men." Leibniz says:

It is unquestionably a fact that one must not commit a sin for all the goods of this world, not even with the motive of preventing other sins. But it is an open question whether one can do something from which he knows certain sins will inevitably result, provided he be certain that by this means he would prevent many more sins or spiritual evils.

To the logic of probabilities which he was driving himself to formulate, Leibniz would have attached such a line of (moral) probabilities and "what can be extracted from the nature of things in proportion to what one knows about them and what can be called likelihood." Leibniz realized also that, even if such a system of logic could be set up, it would be dangerous and difficult to *teach* it. On this point, again, he is Jesuit and not Jansenist. But it can be asked if Pascal, in his vehemence and thanks to it, did not save a more valuable treasure, one which compromise ran the risk of losing, one which is the soul of what toleration is only the body: the love of truth.

All this is evident in the Leibnizian casuistry and spirit of compromise with which he deals with the matter of union of Churches. Leibniz did not bother with individual cases; he was neither confessor nor director obliged to apply the law to individual men. He busied himself with the *general situation*, which presented him with the separated parts of a humanity avid for unity. In this matter of uniting different groups, his task was analogous to that of casuistry. The casuist tries to track down in the inner meaning of a precept that minimum which is of strict obligation. Once this zone has been traced out,

he draws up writs of privileges throughout the adjoining territory: unlimited spheres of concessions, arbitrations, adjustments. In this way, Leibniz determined the absolutely necessary minimum that could be exacted by the party dictating the terms. It is possible to extract from his works the elements of an "ecumenical casuistry" of which traces can be found in Nicholas of Cusa. This casuistry of Leibniz would have the same trait, common to all casuistry, of not knowing how to apply brakes on a down grade, and even of skidding round away from its objective; confronted with a practical mind, it becomes impractical. This casuistry for union would be one of ways and means, specific and provisional; it would mark out the small concrete gains possible *at the moment* on the road towards union.<sup>14</sup>

His policy rested on the distinction between *the best* and *the necessary*. Leibniz called attention to the fact that the ideal is not always absolutely necessary, and, as an example, he would give the institution of monogamy, absent under the Old Law. It is extraordinary how Leibniz foresaw the details and the drawn-out process of reincorporating Protestants into the Church. The Protestants would keep their own disciplinary customs: Communion under two species and even marriage of the clergy. There will be a distinction between necessary "beliefs" and non-necessary "opinions." Protestants will live in the Church as do the religious orders which have their own liturgy or the members of an Oriental Uniate communion. Leibniz, who was gifted with a genius for working out transitions, offered some very practical suggestions, some of which will be taken up later without knowledge of their authorship. One example for the record: Leibniz saw that the study of the Anglican Service could bring Catholics and Protestants closer together.

But Leibniz, like every casuist, oversteps his bounds. There is a significant example which illustrates this and at the same time plainly marks the turning point where the conciliation effort goes into reverse. We are amazed at the rationalization by which Leibniz justifies his stand that, *from the point of view of Catholic orthodoxy*, it was not necessary for him to enter the Church. Curiously, he maintained that he was a real Catholic in spite of external exclusion. He wrote to Madame Brinon:

You are right, Madame, to consider me a Catholic at heart. I am even one openly because it is only obstinacy that makes the heretic and that is something, thank God, of which my conscience has never accused me.<sup>15</sup>

He identified himself as a member of the Church by communion through charity in Jesus Christ. He even went further, deciding that this first qualification was insufficient if he did not make every effort to be also in external communion with the Church "visible and recognizable by the uninterrupted succession of her hierarchy." Certainly, it is difficult for a non-Catholic to go beyond this in good will. Leibniz's attitude prefigures that of Solovyov in the Russian Church, of Lord Halifax in the Anglican Church, of Bergson in Judaism, and of Simone Weil among unbelievers. Through a very deep sense of loyalty these great souls believed that they should remain outside the Church.<sup>16</sup> There remains another explanation which Leibniz advances to justify *from the Catholic point of view* his reluctance to conversion: his conviction that, in

the Roman Church of his day, several philosophical opinions, to which he was bound in conscience, would not be acceptable to the Roman magisterium: therefore, he would be rated as outside the Church even if he entered it. He compares his case to the position of a Catholic who has been unjustly excommunicated but never stops yearning with his whole heart for reinstatement.<sup>17</sup> This was, indeed, the triumph of casuistry because Leibniz managed to deduce from the spirit of faith his justification for disobedience to the discipline of faith! It was, indeed, the ultimate in casuistry, because it is difficult to claim to belong to an organism which is of its essence unified, if its governing power decides you do not belong. Here Pascal would have found in Leibniz signs of that double dealing which he so severely condemned in Jesuit Fathers.

It seems that Leibniz passed through a "Roman fever" period (that of his youth) to a Lutheran state of soul (in the second period of his life), to end up in a rather vague deism. He certainly would have been the first to recognize himself as the same person throughout all these changes. In every incident of development it should be asked if the last phase shows full grown what was barely perceptible at the first stage. What appears to have been Leibniz's most unstable quality, even though he was born into a family of clergymen, is precisely his Lutheranism. His adherence was a matter of social environment, not of intellectual conviction. Furthermore, contact with Catholicism did not have the effect of making him a Catholic or even of making him respond more vigorously to fundamental Lutheranism but, on the contrary, of throwing him back into a sort of trans-Christianity in which neither Catholicism nor Protestantism would be incorporated.

#### *Leibniz' Ecumenical Modernism and the Problem of Church Unity*

**W**E HAVE JUST SEEN that Leibniz' bias was Catholic. In a word, Leibniz was the most Ultramontane of the "heretics" and Pascal the most Genevan of the "Romans." However, the evolution of Leibniz's thought gives fair warning that his Catholic trend was contested by a more fundamental tendency which brought him back to the Protestant mentality. This Protestant way of thinking is revealed in his plan for the union of the Churches.

If it were necessary to label Leibniz' religion, we would say spontaneously, borrowing from current expressions, that he was an Ecumenical Modernist.

Ecumenical—Leibniz is that in the fullest sense of the word, more than any other Christian of his time; all his efforts tended to weld the scission in Christianity. He is not affiliated with the Catholic Church; nevertheless, by a mighty act of his intelligence, he always made the effort, as we know, to place himself at that Church's vantage point. This fact already distinguishes him from Protestantism and allies him with that refractory allegiance given by the Jansenists and the Modernists before, and even after, the condemnations from the Holy See. The Modernist, differing from the Protestant who claims he leaves the Church to reproduce it outside in its purest form, insists that he remains inside the body of the Church to work out its reform there. Pascal, the Jansenist, was a partisan of this second class of minds. Never for a moment did he plan on leaving the Church; he saw in Jansenism not a heresy, not a

sect, but the select group who, by a privilege of the Holy Ghost, was preserving in itself the authentic meaning of tradition.<sup>18</sup> Besides, the heretic often is what he is because of despair and frustration where he would be a reformer working from within. So, according to Renouvier's penetrating remark, Luther "tackled a problem which had no logical solution save his own miraculous elevation to the Papacy."<sup>19</sup> On this point, Leibniz was of the same tribe as the early Luther; his projects could only have been realized if he had been of the Church and sole ruler of the Church. Short of that, he had to restrict the rights of the Church to the point where he could justify his own position outside.

Thus, in the delicate problem of the Church's definition of what pertains to the deposit of revealed truth, Leibniz allows the Church infallibility in the sense that she cannot err in matters which are of faith, but he goes on, without a break, to add that the Church could be mistaken in judging whether a dogma is of faith. This reopens the problem of evidence: all evidence is true, so intuition cannot make a mistake; only, one can incorrectly judge that what is not an intuition is one. Then, who is to decide the question which Church is mistaken and which is not when they teach with equal assurance?

Certainly Leibniz was right in thinking that the Church may not arbitrarily appeal to her prerogatives, that there must be a codex of what has been exactly defined by the magisterium. The Church has recognized the existence of those rules of interpretation which are not within the power of her authority to modify. But this matter of interpretation only involves determining the historical significance of an article of faith, the scope of an act of the magisterium, the range left open to free inquiry. From the Catholic point of view, if the function of the theologians, historians, and critics is to inform authority on the content of faith, they are not the *arbiters*. The rules of interpretation come into force to delimit what is or is not of faith when a definition is applied but not to pass judgment on the definition. Just here is a capital difference in the Catholic and the Protestant approach. No matter how great a part critical judgment plays in Catholicism, it remains always a means of throwing light on a subject but not the source of law or of light. No matter how high the position given authority in Protestantism, judgment is the affair of the believer's private thought and he, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, in the last resort makes the decision.<sup>20</sup>

This describes Leibniz' attitude very well. From outside, he judges the Church and he measures it by a standard of unity personal to himself. He acts like an authority supreme in itself and one which would subject pope and council to his own adjudication. Hence, even when he reaches the conclusion that certain positions taken by the Roman Church are well founded, he does so by a principle other than of adhesion to authority. It would be more a case of accord between his own convictions and the faith of the Church than a matter of conversion. Adolphe Ancelot was not wrong in describing Leibniz's faith in contrast to Pascal's as "the independent submission of a mind that believes after having made its own decision."<sup>21</sup>

Attention must be called to the ambiguity of those terms at the disposal of mediators between the opposing parties.

Leibniz sought an equivalent for Church infallibility that could be acceptable to the Reformers. He found it.

The Church, he says, could be mistaken but not in such a way as to damn us or to damn herself. A Catholic was not, therefore, obliged to secure his salvation by leaving the Church, any more than a Protestant could be obliged to insure his salvation by entering her; each should stay where he is. Thus the Church was not literally *infallible*, but she was *undamning*.

That great mind, so skillful at seeing another's point of view, did not check with himself on this middle term which (like many of his mediations) was entirely on the Protestant side and could not therefore serve as a span: the arch of the bridge rested on one bank only.<sup>22</sup>

Let us now examine Leibniz' explanation of tradition.

In his schemes, as much as in his wishful thinking, Leibniz keeps overstepping the "limits." Being, as it is, here and now, only interests him because of its trend; a law of unlimited growth characterizes it and that law constitutes its true principle of unity, its form, its substance. So, as each progression must fade into a higher type, it can be said that all progress of being tends toward a new form of being. There is here a point of view opposed to that of the Greeks and the philosophers of the Middle Ages.

For Leibniz, the pivot point of nature and of history is not to be sought in the here and now by climbing back over its past: and, furthermore, it is not in sounding the present condition of a being that one gets nearer to its substance. The centre of gravity is in the beyond of the future at the extreme limit of the progression. If these theories are applied to the understanding of religion, our perspectives are going to shift. The institution of religion finds herself, too, examined under this aspect of an infinite mathematical series. Her point of origin, in which she was wont to see her essence, becomes a mere point of departure, analogous to the first term in a numerical series. The use of the early era which we call *tradition* could never regulate a movement which admits of an infinite number of terms. If Leibniz did not speak this language with Bossuet (which Bossuet, not much of a metaphysician, could not have understood), nevertheless, it is this topic which inspires him throughout their long correspondence. Leibniz conceives each element of religion as a moment in transition; revelation has not reached its term; ecumenicity has not been established; definitions of doctrine are not definitive; the Council of Trent has not closed.

#### *Leibniz' Concept of Ecclesiastical Tradition*

**O**N MANY POINTS, Leibniz is, comparatively speaking, in advance of the Catholic theologians of his day who often give him inadequate replies. For example, Arnauld and Bossuet deny any form of change; they defend a static tradition. Therefore, to follow Leibniz into his own territory and fight him with his own arms, it was necessary to ask him for a more thorough analysis of the concept of mutation in the content of faith. But, as Descartes had remarked in his *Discourses*, "the action by which a person knows a thing is different from that by which he knows that he believes it." In the seventeenth cen-

tury, the Catholic theologians lagged behind the Living Church, their thoughts were less rich than the immutable object of these thoughts.

When Leibniz puts himself at the Catholic vantage point, he can give himself a perfect report on what Catholicism presupposes: the Church, to make her position clear to herself, must hold that, without adding to the deposit of faith, she has the power to "analyze it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit," that this analysis cannot simply be reduced to a *logical* process by which, from articles faith has previously defined, one may deduce what was necessarily contained in it.<sup>23</sup> Without possessing that notion of *development of dogma* (which was to become classic two centuries after him), Leibniz produces several of its elements. One would like to imagine the correspondence between Leibniz and a disciple of Newman's similar to that which Leibniz carried on with Père des Brosses, one in which Leibniz would have proved that "development of dogma" agreed with his own system, just as he made the accord of "transubstantiation with his principles." But Leibniz' theory of development would have been entirely different from that which Catholic thought allows in explaining the history of dogma. As a matter of fact, in Leibniz' later philosophy at least, the development which he granted could scarcely be distinguished from Hegelian becoming in this sense that this development was conceived not as the explanation of actual *data* but as the line of march of the essence of a dogma towards a better and indefinite state. Elsewhere, dealing with the question in itself, Leibniz would not accept the proposition that there has been no authentic development of dogma except along Catholic lines. History did not seem to him to give such evidence. His concept of being did not carry him so far as to give privileges to a monad.<sup>24</sup>

If there had been development, then it was everywhere and all the time. Correct development would not be an exclusive property of the Church; it had been noted in the sects: it had been a common property of all the monads. This would mean a metaphysical law and not an improbable accident.

In his considerations on Catholic dogma, Leibniz places himself at two vantage points, very different in themselves and, also, each one as opposed as the other to the principle of development. When he disputes with Bossuet, he would like to get Bossuet into the snare of saying that there are "differences in degree among the articles of faith; there are some more important than others."<sup>25</sup> If Bossuet had granted that, this proposition would have been the middle term useful towards a reunion of Churches because the Protestants anxious to re-enter the Church would not be held to any dogmas except the strictly necessary. But, for that distinction of necessary and non-necessary to be valid, it would mean denying to the Church her prerogative to "define" new dogmas, bringing her back within narrow barriers on tradition, "primitive Church," and "perpetuity." Leibniz wins either way: as sure as Bossuet, rejecting "development," maintains that *everything* has *always* been believed, then Leibniz could refute him on the grounds of historical fact by showing that the Church has defined some points which had been formerly obscure or disputed;<sup>26</sup> as sure as Bossuet grants "development," Leibniz refutes him on the very meaning of the word Catholic Church and her unchangeable tradition. There is, besides, a second method generally used by Leibniz: according

to the Protestant spirit of the age, he accuses the Church of having varied with the times; he criticizes Bossuet from Bossuet's own point of view—it is Leibniz who is partisan of the Primitive Church, of immutability, and it is Bossuet and his followers who are the innovators.

Now, we ask ourselves, how can these two lines of thought of Leibniz be reconciled? On one side, we just saw, he is more the conservative than the Catholic since he brings Bossuet back to the narrowest bounds for tradition; and, on the other side, he is more liberal than the orthodox Protestant since he has readily granted an immanent and progressive revelation. This is not the first occasion on which there has been discovered in Leibniz, instead of reconciliation of contraries, oscillation between these contraries. In this instance, we are trying to locate the Protestant trait in his line of thought. So, observing in the intellectual history of Protestantism a similar fluctuation between contradictory concepts, we are brought round to asking ourselves if analysis of these oscillations, in such a well-endowed intelligence as Leibniz's, would not help us to understand this metaphysic inherent in Protestantism which is one of the leavens of modern thought.

**T**HE OSCILLATION between contraries so noticeable in Leibniz' philosophy would appear, so we believe, one of the characteristics of Protestant mentality if it can be predicated of one man of genius of that mentality. Here, too, are found several extremes categorically supported on the plea of adherence to creed; the postulate of the absolute sovereignty of grace going so far as to condemn reason and the absolute claims of the rights of reason and free-thought—the radical respect for primitive tradition and evolution in the organic and indefinite sense—the justification of the power of the State in matters of religion and the affirmation of the sovereign rights of conscience. So, if tenets as contradictory as these can develop within the same group or within the same mind without compromising unity in thought, unquestionably there must be some imperceptible link between them. This link cannot be in the concepts; between them no middle term or assumption is conceivable since the contrariety has been pushed to the point of contradiction. Nor will it be enough to grant an identity of "Sufficient Reason," the extremes of Protestantism resembling each other in as much as they are equally, though diversely distant from common Catholic belief. There must be in this case a more constitutive and fundamental relation.

We readily seek it in the functioning of the mind which has produced these opposing concepts or attitudes. From this operational point of view, it can be said that what both hold in common (that, at least, which allows them to subsist in the same school of thought or in a lone genius) is *the identity of process which gives them logical being*. But, in what does this process consist if it is so interior to the mind as to be confused with it?

In our opinion, as we have shown elsewhere,<sup>27</sup> it is the process of *dissociation*. This mental operation carries Cartesian analysis until no further decomposition is possible; it evaluates separately every component that has been isolated. As Blondel has already noted, dissociations are of common occurrence with Leibniz:

Dissociation between the subconscious and the conscious, between the sensible order and the intellectual, between the subjective and the ontological, between the calculus of the infinite which proceeds from abstract reasoning and the calculus of the infinite which opens up both thought and being to the ultra-discursive, which, duly verified, seems more real than all defined concepts.<sup>28</sup>

Others of these dissociations can be found in Leibniz—especially apt for such classification is the mathematical technique which seizes on an item, breaks it up into component parts and resolves it into prime factors. Infinitesimal calculus, after all, is nothing more than a new application of the process of approaching the "limit" of a constant quantity which in mathematics is the quantity itself. So, Leibniz's particular method was to continue progressive dissociation as long as he could, then, having decomposed the idea into its notional constituent parts, to ponder just what it was that each was carrying to its limit. Evaluating it thus in its unadulterated form, he would find the principle of unity for all that was divergent or contrary in the original composite idea. Therefore, for him, unity is never fundamental; the constitution of essences is not real. As in Platonism, but in more subtle manner because more interior, the essence of things is outside these things themselves. That is the reason that Leibniz does not think that things are *created* in the fundamental sense of the word which would suppose, according to Saint Thomas, that the relation of matter and form is a real relationship. Leibniz' creatures unfold in time a law given from all eternity, seen and realized by God because this law is necessary in itself. If substance is a *vinculum*, that is because it is outside the realm of phenomena. Thus, dissociation is made not only between concepts but between a being and its proper essence. *Existence* is reduced to *essence* and the latter to *law*. All that Kant will have to do is to insert valves to regulate the flood of mediations Leibniz loosed. But these mediations are fictitious in as much as they were set up after the event and between displaced fragments.

Therefore, between this mental process and the *constituent functioning* of Protestantism there is a family relationship. In fact, it is of the essence of Protestant thought not to accept the composite where the unadulterated and the adulterated are, in full view, mixing and affecting each other, but to evaluate *separately* the untainted element. If the sacraments, or the Church, or if, finally, tradition is set aside, it is because these suppose a monstrous, unclean union of the divine and the human; God's transcendence is hoisted above everything lest it be profaned by contacts. If faith is rated above good works, if God is thought of not as *all*-powerful but the *sole*-powerful, it is only to avoid contamination of the divine by the human. Religion stripped of these historical aspects and of phenomena is brought down to an essence by the approach to its limit. But it is possible that this movement of purification and separation, in its turn, subsists alone. After having assisted in removing impurities from faith, it can apply itself to faith and remove it from us, reducing faith to its limit, which is in fact an act of liberty, a pure interiority. There, where theologies of pure faith spring up, will appear metaphysics of pure liberty. Liberal Protestantism will replace dogmatic Protestantism: this will be part of the same movement.

But, whether the majority of Protestant thinkers choose one of these poles to the exclusion of the other and oppose each other in couples (Hegel and Kierkegaard, Goguel and Barth), or whether, on the contrary, they base their philosophy (as Kant will) on a radical separation of spheres, Leibniz unifies the two points of view, he always tends to identify them. How? To tell the truth, Leibniz does not give a clear-cut explanation of his conduct here because he could not know the potentialities of Protestantism and because the future of his own monad was not disclosed to him. But Leibniz's basic idea was to insure interiority and autonomy by the negation of everything that appeared to restrict the operations of the mind. Moreover, Leibniz typifies the Protestant of the future rather than one of the period of the early Reformers. The influence of Luther and of Calvin shows in one section of his system, in the intimate association of deep pessimism concerning the individual with optimism about the universe in general. Regeneration, justification, predestination—all were retranslated and expressed (perhaps denatured), but they still quicken the mechanism which replaced them. They are not, moreover, in the foreground. What is apparent is that the Protestantism of the future will know the idea of religion of the spirit, one whose principle is to seek in one's deepest interior—that which underlies everything which is body, expression, temporality, to attach us to God alone.

#### *Pascal's Jansenistic Catholicism*

**L**ET US EXAMINE now the nature of Pascal's Catholicism by following the same method used in the study of Leibniz's Protestantism. After having defined what in Pascal is un-Catholic (*acatholique*), we shall show how Pascal's mind still remains the Catholic type, as Leibniz's mind was that of the Reformers' type.

When speaking of Pascal's Jansenism, we must guard against a retrospective illusion: when we study a current of thought, there is a tendency to suppose it to have been what it later became, as if its historical development had been contained in its beginning. This caution is even more necessary when consideration of the Church and her anathemas is involved. Between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, in spite of the sharp line of external demarcation, there exist imperceptible gradations. Furthermore, lines of thought can be found even in the Church which are related to heterodox lines without being, for all that, any less Catholic; and, inversely, there exist in heterodoxy some tendencies orientated towards the Church which, nevertheless, do not rescue a Protestant Church from the character of opposition. The fact is that affiliation with an organic and living society transforms the character of the adherence we give to our own opinions; affiliation makes these partake in spite of ourselves in a life of higher unity. A disciple of Saint Cyr, when he is in the Church, communicating in the unity of the Church, cannot deny that Molinos and Ignatius are also thinkers of the same communion and, in some obscure way, he imbibes something of the contrary aspect into his own line of thought. On the other hand, if he has broken from unity with the Church, he cannot fructify his own thought by contact with contrasts; he is confined to solitude, localized by the spirit of a system or sect. So, even if he compensates for this

by genius or by industry, he lacks that which is given by association within a corporate body large enough to be filled with diversities and peaceful controversies. This means that the Augustinianism of Port Royal which, in spite of its plunging, remained united to the visible Church, because it never agreed to separation, is of a nature entirely different from that of Luther who broke from the body. A similar line of thought does not have the same meaning in different environments, contexts, ambiances. Every secession introduces a line of absolute cleavage; it thrusts outside that which up to then had been living within while it was difficult to decide whether or not it were a healthy element. It can be said that Jansenism is the homologue of Protestantism within the bosom of the Church. Cournot says that it is a "feeble copy of the Protestant type of reform."<sup>29</sup> In Jansenism as in Protestantism, we find the proposal to restore primitive Christianity, the emphasis on God's part in the work of our salvation, the supreme place given to Saint Augustine, independence of private judgment, the part assigned to the laity in apologetics and in the apostolate. But not one of these features is specifically Protestant. The Franciscans also wished to go back to Evangelical times; the Thomists were very ready to assent to Saint Augustine's formula; Saint Bernard showed an independent spirit when treating with the pope (as did Paul when he "resisted" Peter); and the laity were to take an ever more and more important place in the Church... Furthermore, Port Royal was strictly faithful to Catholic teaching on the sacraments, on the priesthood, nay, even on the authority of bishops and that of the Holy See. There is a tendency to forget that, in their day, the Jansenists were the adversaries of the Protestants, that they spurned the idea of schism. Port Royal would have let itself be razed first; it believed itself the Church's faithful watchdog, even if a growler.

Pascal's protest is more in his tone than in his subject-matter. It is said that Jansenism altered him and made him hard, that it is a pity that he had not met a Saint Francis de Sales or a Bérulle on his path, that he lived out his life in a kind of Catholic dissidence. But how could a genius who needed *signs from heaven* and causes to defend have aroused himself to the problems posed by religion if these did not appear to him in insolent and provocative guise? To produce results, Pascal required an atmosphere of battle, protest, and defiance. Even his physical constitution thrived on such; he never showed more poise than when facing his opponents.<sup>30</sup> People who knew him say that his habitual expression was that of a man in a fit of temper. If Christian belief was to interest him, he must be able to present it to himself under the forms in which it had appeared at its start: a paradox to defend, evidence to be produced, a struggle to revitalize, an orthodoxy to sustain. Newman said that the early Christians formed "the party" of Christ. Pascal would have readily allied himself to such a party as Saint Paul did. Just as Paul, once he was a Christian, felt reborn in himself the need for a fight and satisfied that need on the domestic foe constituted at the time by the "Judaizers," so Pascal, converted to a more ardent Christianity and unable to restrain himself, found in the Jesuits, the Molinists and lax Catholics material for his indispensable rage.

Pascal did not have to propose to himself the problem of union among Christians which so exercised Leibniz's talent for conciliation, but we can

easily infer that his feelings on the subject were basically the same as Arnauld's and Bossuet's.

It is in Leibniz's correspondence with Madame de Brinon, whose feminine intuition goes straight to the point, that Leibniz reveals himself most; there is found the interminable dialogue of contradictions and the mutual exchange of accusations of obstinacy. Pascal would certainly have spoken as Madame de Brinon did:

Truth does not divide itself; either you deceive yourself or we deceive ourselves: the latter situation cannot obtain because we have not severed the union and we have remained attached to the trunk of the tree.<sup>31</sup>

To which Leibniz replied:

You say that it is necessary to hold to the trunk of the tree but the stock is Jesus-Christ; He is the vine, we are the branches. Decide for yourself if those whose devotions are solid and directed to God do not abide in Him more than those who throw themselves into superstitious practices and give to creatures that which belongs to God alone, to God who has said that He is so jealous of His own honor.<sup>32</sup>

It is necessary to work zealously for the correction of those in error and, when hope of achieving this is lost, there must be a resolute break with those who disfigure the Church; otherwise, one is party to their damnation by closing one's eyes on these public abuses.<sup>33</sup>

This same Leibniz wrote that "Pascal had the genuine Roman party spirit, as his posthumous works make clear."<sup>34</sup>

It is doubtful if Leibniz knew that Pascal had written:

The Pope hates thinkers who are not subject to him by vow.  
Good popes will still find the Church in state of clamor.  
If my letters are condemned at Rome, that which I condemn will be condemned in heaven. *Ad tuum, Domine Jesu, tribunal appello.*  
You yourselves are corruptible.  
It is better to obey God than to obey men.

But Pascal had also written:

The Body is not more alive without a head than a head without a body...  
We know that all the virtues, martyrdom, austerities, and good works avail nothing outside the Church or out of communion with the head of the Church who is the pope.<sup>22</sup>

Emotional counter-currents have co-existed in several of the mystics, and Joan of Arc's trial has revealed to us a dialectic comparable to Pascal's: first movement of independence and inability to deny the evidence; higher movement of fidelity to tradition which sustains you and cannot be fundamentally contrary to your voices.

One could dispute forever how far we can judge which of these two movements was in the ascendancy on that nineteenth day of August 1662, the date of Pascal's death. To us Beurrier's deposition seems clear on this last point. Whatever the decision, it is certain that the two counter-currents existed in Pascal.

In Leibniz, the second movement did not exist because the idea that he had of an All and a Universal is the All of the rational universe, it is not the All of a faith expressed through a visible head. Two notions of organic totality invincibly confront each other.<sup>35</sup>

*The Two Types of Ecumenical Thought Considered in Relation with the Idea of Being and that of Truth*

**I**N THE BEGINNING of the *Theodicy*, Leibniz speaks of two insoluble problems: the one in geometry is that of infinity; the other for the common man, that of predestination. There is still a third: in the order of religion there is the problem of ecumenism because no mediation can ever join the two forms of Christian aspiration into a unity. When Leibniz, in order to unite the two contraries, realizes that it is necessary to subordinate one to the other, he tends to sacrifice that of the two which seems to him the more irrational; if pushed on to further retrenchment, he would sacrifice discontinuity; he would sacrifice liberty; he would sacrifice Catholicism.

Taking up a position between Catholicism and Protestantism, and anxious to make them harmonize, Leibniz does not elect one of the two terms to force the other into it, nor does he propose an ecumenical unity in which the two religions would be re-absorbed. He tries to drive the two spirits to their limits. Thus, he makes the effort to reform Protestantism according to an ideal model by closer union among the different Confessions, more suppleness in principles, more conformity to traditional observance, greater breadth of mind in relations with the Catholic Church. And, at the same time, he proposes to reform Catholicism by demonstrating the rational substratum of her doctrines and their consonance with Primitive Christianity, by supplying arguments for dogmas seemingly inadmissible to the moderns (such as the Resurrection and Transubstantiation), by showing the fitness of practices supposedly perverted (such as the cult of the Saints and Masses for private intentions), finally, by presenting some plans for reforming the religious orders and some directives concerning the Church's mission in the world. In doing this, he is giving satisfaction (or so he believed) to both parties. Besides cutting down by infinitely small amounts several details of misunderstanding, he is preparing for the complete union which will not require any of the parties to recant. Thus progress is made towards an ideal Church in which the present Churches will find themselves raised "to a nobler state than they have of themselves." And, once the reunion has been effected, the differences which might linger on by the weight of the past and its obscure prejudices, would tend to vanish as do differences in infinitesimal calculus.

Leibniz wrote to Madame de Brinon:

You are right in saying that in our approach it seems as if all the Catholics will become Protestants and the Protestants become Catholics. That is just what we have been claiming too. A medley is going to result from this which, please God, will have all the good points you acknowledge in yourselves... Some time ago I said that when the Protestants have been made Catholics, the Catholics will be found to have become Protestants.<sup>36</sup>

To sum up, Leibniz's plan was to deal with Catholicism and Protestantism as two contraries and the question involved in their union by asking each to be faithful throughout to its essential character. This is how the method of solution is put into words by the ablest commentator on Leibniz's religious views:

By formulating precisely the notion of continuity and the notion of limit, by showing that infinitesimals possess the property of being further divided and see their infinitely small differences disappear at their limit, he symbolized those fruitful and living unions which can be definitive only if they tended from the start towards a limit. Just as a definite integral is bound by two given extremities, so the drive for religious union will be tested at its origin by two opposing doctrines severed by a clean stroke.

Shall I join them end to end? Can I even measure a curve by ordinary and finite procedures? But if I take the sum of the small chords subtending the small arcs, I get where I can prove that a small arc differs from its chord only by very small quotients of a higher power; but, if I take the sum of the small arc lengths and the sum of the small chord lengths, I have the same quantity at the limit. The same thing holds in religious philosophy; can I speak of an end to end union between Transubstantiation and the Real Presence, personal liberty and divine fore-knowledge, Catholicism and Protestantism? I would produce by that method a juxtaposition or a summation. But, if I consider the two doctrines that I wish to reconcile as two magnitudes externally bounded which I must decompose into their innumerable elements, what I really do is take an integral capable of cancelling out at the limit the infinitely small differences of these two magnitudes which, externally, are circumscribed and lack any mode of convergence.<sup>37</sup>

This deep page, where the author brings to light the hidden bond between mathematical and mystical intuitions, helps in appraising the distance between the two ecumenical thoughts which still divide Christians. Leibniz makes the effort to put himself above the middle-wall of separation so as to reconcile the Roman concept of unity centered on one only Rome and a "comprehensive" concept of union among the Churches. But, here again, the intermediary which he proposes stands on only one of the slopes: it remains more ecumenical than Catholic.

Now, since, from the Catholic point of view, historical universality cannot be predicated of one of the two contraries, it is with the inferiority of Protestantism that the union must take place if a richer essence is to be formed. The whole point of the Catholic Church is to affirm that she is a unit, or, put in ontological terms, that she possesses the structure of an organic being and composition of diverse parts. The possibility is granted that, in consequence of cycles of duration, through force of circumstances, or by the prevalence of some influence, one of the two contraries has seemed at times the only one acknowledged in her. The fact cannot be denied that there have been epochs when the Church insisted more on grace than on liberty, or more on the authority of the pope than that of the bishops; it can even happen that, over long periods, one of the contraries was thrown into the shade and not allowed to develop. It had, none the less, a virtual existence; if some external influence was required to bring it forth again, the Church would confine herself to arousing that influence, she would not create it. This is the point that Leibniz could

scarcely grasp. To him, Catholic intransigence appeared to be intolerance. This was because he accepted Catholicism and Protestantism on equal footing—one was worth as much as the other. Pushed further, if the philosopher in him had to make a choice, he put the higher valuation on Protestantism as being the purest or rather the only pure doctrine, the only one truly universal and worthy of a reasonable mind.

Translated by F. A. McGOWAN

<sup>1</sup> IIa-IIae, Q.122, ad 1. See Baudin, *La Philosophie de Pascal*, II, pp. 173; 187.

<sup>2</sup> Pensées, No. 489; No. 556.

<sup>3</sup> Baruzi, *Leibniz et l'organisation religieuse de la terre*. Paris, 1907. Pp. 432; 438; 442-446.

<sup>4</sup> Grua, *Textes inédits; d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque provinciale de Hanovre*. Paris, 1948. V. I, pp. 258-262.

<sup>5</sup> *Regulariter autem, quaecumque realiter distincta sunt, per potentiam Dei absolutam possunt separari, et quidem ita ut vel alterutrum subsistat, altero destructo, vel utrumque, sed separatim (Systhema theologicum)*, Foucher de Careil, edit. *Oeuvres*. Paris, 1858-1875. Vol. I, p. 614.

<sup>6</sup> In his *Systema theologicum*, where Leibniz, though Protestant, expounds (in 1684) the Catholic doctrine on the "Motive of the Incarnation," we read: "Hominum autem naturam assumpsit, tum quia in homine superiores atque inferiores nature quasi in confinio quodam conjuguntur, tum vero quia expiatio generis humani, quae Deo imprimis curae fuit, non alia dignius ratione fieri poterat; et placuerat ut filius homo factus omnia virtutis exempla ederet, priuque summa humilitate ac patientia vinceret quam incredibili illa gloria homo coronaretur." Foucher de Careil, *op.cit.*, I, p. p. 542.

<sup>7</sup> *v. infra*. mission of Justification of faith through the teaching of the sciences, Propagation of faith to foreign lands. TR.)

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Baruzi, *op.cit.*, pp. 440; 450; 452; and Gehrhardt, *Die philosophischen Schriften*, Berlin, 1875-1890, pp. 536; 592. It is curious to find in Renouvier, also a Church reformer, though a bitter enemy of the Jesuits, the idea that one day the pope would be chosen from the ranks of the professed Fathers of the Society of Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> Baruzi, *op.cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79. It should be mentioned that the letter of commission given by Louis XIV who, under pressure from Père de la Chaise, friend of Leibniz, sent the Jesuits to China, is entirely secular in tone: "Being very pleased to do our part for anything that can make for greater safety in navigation and the cultivation of the arts and sciences... we commission and appoint Père de Fontenoy, the Jesuit... our mathematician."

<sup>12</sup> Gehrhardt, *op. cit.*, III, p. 196.

<sup>13</sup> Pensées, I. No. 131 to No. 137.

<sup>14</sup> Baruzi, *op. cit.*, p. 416.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28 If. "However, these persons believe themselves good Catholics and like those who have been unjustly excommunicated, *clave errante*, because they point out that they hold the doctrines of the Catholic Church and long for external communion which others prevent by putting obstacles in their way."

<sup>16</sup> Bergson's motivation was much more religious. He explained that he did not wish to abandon his Jewish brethren in the hour of persecution. Simone Weil wanted to take her part in the trial of the world of unbelievers and she feared that conversion would disassociate her from them. Lord Halifax thought that he could render truer service to the cause of Church Unity by remaining in a Church already separated. It is clear that, for the Catholic theologian, the "maxims" of these decisions are wrong and cannot be of universal application because, if it is accepted that one can be unfaithful through loyalty, it would destroy the concept of a Church, one and indivisible and necessary for salvation.

<sup>17</sup> This case has been cited by Saint Augustine (*De vera religione*, 11: *Hos coronat in occulto Pater, in occulto videns: rarum hoc videtur genus sed tamen exempla non desunt: imo plura sunt quam credi possunt.*

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Baudin, *La philosophie de Pascal*, II, pp. 109-111.

<sup>19</sup> Renouvier, *Philosophie analytique de l'histoire*. Paris, 1896. III, p. 213.

<sup>20</sup> This is true only for one of the faithful with Church affiliations. It is evident that a person who is not in the Church and who questions himself on the motives that might make him join, cannot yet comply with her discipline; that he has, therefore, no other explicit light than that of his reason.

<sup>21</sup> Acelot, "Etude comparative sur Pascal et Leibniz." *Annales de l'Académie de Clermont*, 1858, No. 412.

<sup>22</sup> To grant that, in principle, salvation can be realized outside affiliation with the body of the Church, would be to destroy, at its base, the very idea of one Church, social and visible.\* It would mean also the substitution of a vague concept of union among the Churches for the ideal of Church unity. It can be said that Leibniz's bent was towards subordinating unity to union rather than union to unity. It seems that, if Pascal had dealt specifically with ecumenism, it would have been a reversal in direction. As indicated from his own writings, this formula could be borrowed from a letter

of Lacordaire's: "The Church excludes all that contradicts her, but this does not prevent her from being universal; heresy attracts even what contradicts it, this does not keep it from being local." this text is cited in Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, pp. 367-369.

<sup>23</sup> "It seems that you yourself, Monsieur [Bossuet], leave a back exit open in saying that ecumenical councils, when they decide some truth, do not propose new dogmas but have those pronounced which have always been believed and only explain them in clearer and more precise terms. Because, if the pronouncement contains some proposition which cannot be deduced by a valid and obvious conclusion from what has already been received up to that moment and, consequently, is not virtually contained therein, it must be acknowledged that the new decision is, in fact, a new article of faith, no matter how one would wish to cover up the thing under the name of pronouncement." May 14, 1700. Foucher de Careil, edit., *Oeuvres de Leibniz*. Paris, 1850-1875, II, p. 321.

<sup>24</sup> However, there was in his system a mode of expressing the Roman Catholic position: this would be to see, in the development of the Catholic Church, a complete monad and, in the other lines of duration, some monads which were incomplete and deranged in consequence of a disproportionate quantity of one of their elements. In the latter case (and to use some analogies beloved of Leibniz), the relation of the ellipse to the parabola could stand as a figure of Catholicism and the Confessions issued from it—the parabola having been an ellipse in the place of its origin, when wrenched from its moorings, finds itself stretching out towards infinity.

<sup>25</sup> December 1699. Foucher de Careil, *op.cit.*, II, p. 279.

<sup>26</sup> "It must be held as certain that the Ecumenical Councils, when they define some truth, do not propose new dogmas but only get proclaimed those which have always been believed and only explain them in clearer and more precise terms." January 9, 1700, *ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>27</sup> *L'existence temporelle*, I, ch. iv. "L'être et l'esprit."

<sup>28</sup> Maurice Blondel, *Le "Vinculum substantiale" d'après Leibniz et l'ébauche d'un réalisme supérieure*. Paris, 1930, p. 68.

<sup>29</sup> *Considérations sur la marche des idées dans les temps modernes*, éd. Boivin, I, p. 305.

<sup>30</sup> In the Riom Museum there is a painting, not well known but worth studying, which shows Pascal replying to his adversaries.

<sup>31</sup> Madame de Brion to Leibniz, February 11, 1694. Foucher de Careil, *op.cit.*, II, p. 25.

<sup>32</sup> Leibniz to Madame de Brion, February 18-28, *ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>34</sup> The correspondence between Arnauld and Leibniz suggests elements of a similar exchange; see February 1-11, Gehrhardt, *Die philosophischen Schriften*, Berlin, 1875-1890, III, p. 196.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Chevalier, *Pascal*, Paris, 1940, pp. 361-372; Brémont, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux*, IV; Baudin, *La philosophie de Pascal*.

<sup>36</sup> Baruzi, *Leibniz et l'organisation religieuse de la terre*. Paris, 1907, p. 414. Cf. pp. 185; 356. Baruzi's work is complemented by texts recently published by Grua, *Textes inédits d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque provinciale d'Hanovre*. Paris, 1948, section III, particularly the *De Purgatorio*, where Leibniz's wide acquaintance with Patristic writings is evident, and *De cultu Sanctorum*, originating in a polemic on the Novena to Saint Anthony of Padua (p. 155).

<sup>37</sup> Baruzi, *op.cit.*, pp. 238-239.

<sup>38</sup> This correlates exactly with an idea that Leibniz many a time expressed: if he had been born into the Catholic Church, he would never have left it to become a Protestant; he even went so far as to say that, all things considered, there was nothing that should be reformed in the dogmas of the Catholic Church (*Textes inédits*, I, 177-178.)

Catholicism seemed to him the highest possible approximation to religious truth if only it were freed of its spirit of exclusiveness. All of which goes to say that Leibniz, born into Protestantism, remained a Protestant, and found it preferable. On the whole he did right: born into Catholicism, and remaining there, his principles would never have been those of Catholicism.

# DEAD FORMS OF CHRISTENDOM\*

ANDRÉ DUMAS

## *Some Inevitable Questions*

**W**E DO NOT WISH to question everything again. On the contrary, our generation has rediscovered a theological objectivity, a cosmic range in faith, a true liberty in regard to the secular, a sense of history, and a notion of progress which is without either fear or insolence.

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We knew of a certain brand of liberalism and a certain kind of individualism that are now dead, but we thought that out of such decay it would be possible to build a new edifice, based on the virtues of intransigence and community. Some went so far as to see in the hatching of pagan totalitarianisms a providential appeal to revive a Christian totalitarianism.

In a situation like this language that is not carefully controlled betrays its lie. For parallel to this doctrinal revival, we have lived through a sociological dislocation. The foundations were being hollowed out still further, but the roof was collapsing. The title of Mounier's first article, "To remake the Renaissance," and that of his last book, *The Late Christendom*, thus mark out our itinerary. It must be understood why, at the same time that we affirm this integral presence of the Christian in the world of men, we did not seek to rebuild a Christian world. In this perspective, I believe it is right to reject continually a political-social Christendom,<sup>1</sup> which would be established in its sclerosis, its partisan power or its pretended political indifference. I think that the lack of enthusiasm for preparing generations of social-Christians is equally well founded. Would they not be as conformist as their elders, conservative Christians, as anxious to surround the various social, family and labor organisms as their grand-parents were to enter diplomacy or the army? Finally, I admire the lucid steadfastness before the dream of a "progressive" Christendom to be born in a Marxist world. At a moment when so many nostalgias and so many aspirations murmur "Let Christendom live and revive, adapt itself, take root and grow again, baptize, frame and model," we must understand the doctrinal and practical reasons which continue to make us reject, without fear or defeatism, these outmoded forms of Christendom. We must know them all the better since today America seems headed towards this ersatz Church,<sup>2</sup> and the Marxist world too often copies the Christian world in its most equivocal aspects, and its passion for political synthesis seems to be derived from our obsession for the clerical synthesis.

\* The title in the original, *Feu les chrétiens?*, assumes awareness of Mounier's book, *Feu le chrétienté* (*The Late Christendom*). Christendom (*chrétienté*), as distinct from Christianity, is constantly used in this article in a pejorative sense. This same terminology was employed in an earlier article in CROSS CURRENTS, "Christianity and laicity" (Winter 1952).

Today this primary questioning of political-social Christendom seems understood in our groups. There is not so much need of breaking open these doors, even if we must watch out to keep them open. To speak of points of rupture in this domain alone would be to yield to the exclusive politicization of man today; it would be also to miss seeing how much—particularly in our country, so revolutionary in ideas and so conservative in customs—other re-examinations of an ethical and spiritual order have become necessary in their turn. These questions will perhaps be particularly hard to bring up without misunderstanding. We wish here only to sketch its actuality, asking for help and understanding from those who have already lived the strange experience of being strengthened in their doctrinal conviction while tending to question their own habits, of finding themselves more deeply enrooted at the same time that a familiar soil was suddenly missing.

*The Ambiguities of "Natural Christendom"*

**P**OLITICAL CHRISTENDOM discovered the relativity of its forms through the intrusion of history. Our generation accepts the fact that history conditions the incarnation of our interior life. The denial by Marxism of the perennial nature of Christian structures is thus admitted, and is even given a real hearing and utilized to advantage. This is not true of the existentialists' denial of Christian morality, and the absolute of its essences and its natures. On the contrary, it seems that unable to absolutize history, we have recourse here to a new absolute, transferred to a domain which appears to be independent of time and place, since it is inscribed in the very soil of creation; for the domain of nature and of life are both presented as a certain immediacy from God.

This is a delicate point to consider, for the Christian today reacts to it with the same silent violence as earlier generations manifested before other taboo-commandments, which similarly armed consciences, produced sacrifices and displays of loyalty, and also stirred up hypocrisies. For example, we are no longer as sensitive as the first Christians were in the matter of having contacts with pagans, or as medieval Christians were about the practice of lending at interest, or as 17th century Puritans in regard to Sunday observance, or as the 19th century middle-class were in respect for property. Today, however, we are encouraged to exaggerate a new taboo. The possibilities of human intervention, whether liberating or destructive, into secrets that used to be considered unattainable, now appear so tremendous that we are instinctively tempted to oppose them with "the eternal visage of nature" and "the sacred character of life."<sup>3</sup> Here we see the relationship of problems as different in themselves as absolute pacifism, birth control, therapeutic abortion, help for "normal" suffering such as that encountered in childbirth, the traditional preservation of sexual differentiation, and even of a masculine and feminine "essence," the legitimacy of the seizure of the atomic secrets of matter, the right of art to do violence to the appearances of beings and things, the penetration of consciences by technical means, and finally euthanasia. None of these problems is simple, for they force man to accept a responsibility to which we have no way of knowing that he is equal.

We can understand historically why the preceding generations did not experience the same awful terror that we do in the face of these moral debates. They did not have to confront the same possibilities of human intervention. In a certain sense it was nature herself that sacrificed generations of children at an early age. Besides, our ancestors did not have the same sensibility to interior sufferings, nor the same fanatic respect for life, for they were less profoundly nihilistic, and following the injunction of the Gospel, had less fear of those who could kill the body than of those who were able to destroy the soul.<sup>4</sup> Do we not find here one of the reasons why the death penalty caused so little torment to the consciences of past ages that were as murderous as our own?

It is entirely normal then that our generation forces us, because of the conflict of a more sensitive conscience with a moral total possibility of human intervention, to recall the commandment: Thou shalt not kill. What would be inadmissible would be if this reminder took on that same intangible and ultimately irresponsible and inhuman aspect that covered other commandments in other ages. The error for Christians would be to distinguish themselves today by a refusal to understand—without being able to avoid—the real problems which are raised by the law of respect for nature and for life,<sup>5</sup> just as in the middle ages they could be distinguished by their opposition to usury (but not by the liberation of the serfs, which was its parallel commandment in the Mosaic law), or in the 19th century by their individualistic piety (but not by a sense of social responsibility, which was its immediate corollary in the primitive Church).

We believe that Christianity itself offers an antidote to these cut-and-dried moralistic positions, which constantly transform the liberty, the actuality and the humanity of its requirements into a system of untouchable observances, thereby substituting religion for faith. Has not the essence of Pharisaism consisted in this fixing of the divine promise and the divine law into a moralistic Christendom which was oppressive for others as well as for itself?

Did not Jesus Christ have more trouble in separating himself from the Pharisees than from the zealots who were partisans of a politico-social Christendom? Thus we see Jesus forewarning men against this perversion of the divine law. At the same time that he accomplished the Law perfectly, he continually violated it, in order to demonstrate to what a degree it ought to be at the service of men. The commandments of Moses were wholly observed, without leaving out a single detail, and yet were destroyed in their seeds of legalism by One who neglected the Sabbath, disobeyed his father and mother, took up the whip of vengeance against those that were selling in the Temple, pardoned the woman taken in adultery, chose his disciples from among plundering tax-collectors, was silent before false witnesses and denounced the greed of the most "religious" of his contemporaries.

Moral legalism is thus condemned when it might deter man from his responsibilities in regard to his real situation. The example in this area by the patriarchs, those fathers of the faith, is instructive, but difficult to interpret because of the difficulty of customs, and of the divine pedagogy used with "the hardness of hearts," and the "suspension of ethics" in the world of faithful

obedience which was theirs. We may nevertheless remember the priority of their universe to that of law, which, according to the great reminder of St. Paul, came only 430 years after Abraham. Let us admit that there are here some very annoying examples for our security if we want to deduce from faith a universal moral law. The most celebrated among them, in this regard, is the story of Jacob, who deceived his father, his brother and his father-in-law, in order to gain both the divine blessing and earthly riches. But Abraham, less obviously sly, seems his equal in scandalous conduct, when in order to save his life he twice passes off his wife for his sister and surrenders her to the desires of the Pharaoh and the King of Gerara (*Gen. 12 and 20*). We cannot draw any generalization from these examples: for example, to affirm that the patriarchs had the religious right to act immorally would be the very principle of the ends justifying the means, and of the kind of demoralization at the root of fanaticism. But to maintain that we are calling acts immoral which did not appear so in those days, would be to deny the evidence of the crafty character of Jacob, pursued by his brother's hatred, deceived by his father-in-law in his turn, and to forget the terror felt by the pagan kings at the deceit of Abraham. To affirm, even, that morality was re-established by the reprisals, by which Jacob was punished and Abraham hunted out, would be to misunderstand the strange indifference of God before these ethical dealings, since he allows others than himself to administer the punishment, and in many cases—as in life—there is no punishment at all! Do not these examples, chosen from among many others, tend to show that the man who is a believer is less concerned about erecting an abstract morality than of following, in the midst of worldly detours, a path of obedience to God, made up of personal cases which are not always innocent but indicate an acceptance of responsibility, and of preferential situations which include scandal. God concerns himself with developing the morality of the sacred, treating it as an affair of men, this side of the great drama of his election. God does not allow himself to become identified with a particular absolute morality, any more than with respect for life, to which those strange stories of the extermination of peoples by the sword at the time of the entry in the Promised Land give testimony...

**T**HE DECALOGUE, when presented as the foundation-stone of a universal morality, also participates in its formulation in a certain relativism. For example, the honor due to the parents in it is obviously tied up with the "happy continuation" of the patriarchal society, the command against greed for the neighbor's house here precedes the prohibition of desire for his wife, etc. We could certainly suppress these small difficulties and make the ten commandments the abstract chart of every society worthy of the name human. But this abstraction would take away the whole flavor of the motives for these commands. A moralistic Christendom would then take its place, like any other myth, beyond the real debates of mankind. The living polarization of the Decalogue would disappear. We would forget its initial end: to forewarn a people who were formerly slaves against allowing themselves, in their freedom and prosperity, to forget the requirements of divine sanctification and human respect, of which they had been deprived during the time of their oppression

in Egypt. The particularism of the Decalogue and of the laws which surround it and apply it first of all to the people of Israel alone, ought to be a defense against legalistic abstraction which would be indifferent to human situations.

The morality of primitive Christianity is also addressed to a man *in situation* and as such supports a process of re-discovery that is in no way blasphemous. The celebrated examples of the primitive Church are not ideal and eternal models, but particular and immediate responses. The exhortation given to wives to submit themselves in all things to their husbands aimed at reconciling their nature as women of an ancient world with the preaching of salvation in Jesus Christ. It discovered in the humility of the Lord saving souls through his submission, a meaning in their lived situation. But it would not know how to aim at making feminine nature perpetually the servant of man. The holding of consumer goods in common at Jerusalem was an attempt to destroy the particularism of lives in the society of that time. It did not present itself as the ideal solution to the economic-social problem and it was very strongly combatted when it became, in other parishes, a cause for laziness, disorder and the disparagement of Christian workers by their pagan employers. The total loyalty in regard to the Roman empire sought to dispel the calumnies on the part of both Jews and pagan philosophers, which presented these first Christians as "enemies of human kind." It gave witness also, in spite of the Apocalypse, to the then unanimous conviction that human civilization had reached a happy stability in the Roman Empire. It explains, deceiving the anachronistic assumptions of many, that the first Christians did not ever conceive of themselves as revolutionaries foretelling the downfall of the ancient world; that they almost always minimized the persecutions by which Caesar harassed them, they believed, by error. This loyalism, however, is not the *a priori* conservative doctrine that later periods have wished to eternalize by starting with this example, strangely forgetting the complementary lesson that the prophets bring on this point to the apostles.

Thus every occasional ethical response tends, unfortunately, to become abstract and eternal doctrine. To take up the language of Mircea Eliade in his *Histoire des religions*, we think that in a Christian perspective moral decisions ought always to remain parables; they should use the situations of the time in order to invent and transcribe the very movement of the appeal of God to man. But they are constantly in danger of being transformed into religious *archetypes*, which pretend to be located in an unchangeable heaven, and of imposing themselves on successive generations who would be verbally faithful at the same time that they would be profoundly irresponsible. The parable liberates, because it furnishes a spiritual background to the lived experience, and this background both reconciles and activates the human fact, calling upon it to understand and modify itself. The archetype oppresses, for in sacralizing the experience of one age, it stiffens. It demands that the experience no longer be understood in relation to God, but in believing itself to have emanated from God himself. The parable uses nature. The archetype eternalizes it to the point where it does violence to it.

The constant combat between a moralizing and a natural Christendom will be attentive to these lessons of the past and will ask itself what are then today

the tacit archetypes in which the law of God is able to be kept in safety. For to put God in nature, to change a precise moral point into an absolute, forbidden as a stolen secret or a sacred postulate, this would be, under the pretext of preserving man from inhumanity, to make him inhuman both to himself and to others. The history of the past warns us that our eyes open to the full very slowly. Bitter experiences have tortured a Christendom that had gone to sleep over its taboos both in the moral and in the political-social order. Generations of women have suffered from the hardening of the apostolic parables. Similarly, centuries of Christian citizens have badly interpreted the question of loyalty to political power. To take up the example again, which has seemed to us to be the underlying question today, are we sure that we are not erecting a false absolute today—in a time when man for the first time has taken possession of life, as he has already taken possession of the space of the earth, and of history—in one of the areas in which it is necessary for him to exercise a responsibility with an increased discernment, but not to build up an abstract defense? Can we know if the archetype of a natural secret has not tacitly replaced the parable to which this new situation invites us?

Neither good nor evil are in things, but in man. ("There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man."—*Mark vii, 15*) But this man is in effect in a double situation. He is the "image of God" and in this title the domination of nature is confided to him. He is unduly "the knower of good and evil," and in this title he is the usurper installed by the serpent on the throne of the divine wisdom and power. At each new choice man ought to ask himself if he is the demiurge or the profaner, if his submission to *physis* represents the faithful love of a created order, or the fatal slavery to an accursed disorder. It is then impossible to decide *a priori* the limit of division between the responsibilities and the prohibitions without referring oneself to the human consequences that they entail.

#### *The Escape of "Spiritualist Christendom"*

**T**HE DISLOCATION of political-social Christendom, and the calling into question of a moralistic and natural Christendom, certainly facilitate a frank and fruitful collaboration between believers and unbelievers. Emmanuel Mounier was preoccupied with this possibility from the beginning of *Esprit*.<sup>6</sup> We see him at first careful "to preserve the Christian dimension in our publications as in our interior lives." "I affirm my energetic intention to insure the independence of Catholics... and to see them come with all their baggage." "As director I will not only refuse an attack against the Church (and I will be able to ask Catholics to take elsewhere, in confessional reviews, their dogmatic and metaphysical attacks against Protestantism), but even a temporal solution, which would be in open opposition to an encyclical. It is on this last point that there will be great difficulties." "We ought to establish clearly, or to reestablish, that we represent parties of the spirit before belonging to the party of the revolution." "Our limit is on the border of atheism. This is really a frontier beyond which no collaboration is possible." Nevertheless, aside from such categorical declarations, Mounier was extremely concerned that his review

would reach an audience far beyond the tiny fringes of non-Catholics that were attracted by Maritain, in spite of his desire for universality, in his collection *Roseau d'Or. Esprit* wished to be a crossroad which would not exclude any true dialogue.

In truth these preliminary formulas are never more than first drafts, sometimes indicating too much uneasiness, sometimes too simplistic. Thus Mounier concludes his double reflection on the liberties of the Christian and of the non-believer with a personal avowal: "It is certain that the secret of our sincerity with non-Catholics, as of our fidelity to Catholicism, is ultimately hidden in the heart of each of us."

In the test, this sincerity and this fidelity have borne their fruit. A certain anti-clericalism is dead with its enemy. From now on one will regard the other no longer as an adversary, a hostage, or a curiosity. He will be respected, and will often be felt as a brother. The essay of Bertrand d'Astorg, *Aspects de la littérature européenne*, seems symptomatic of a period in which the writings of non-believers are not secretly classed on one side for derision, while those of Christians bathe in praise. We refresh ourselves at the double source of a universe bearing in outline the signs of the Incarnation and the Redemption, and of a world denuded, where the absence of God no longer speaks to us of Him, but of ourselves, even in that part of atheism which is constitutive of all humanity in its depths. We no longer have the need of humanizing Christians, nor of spiritualizing mankind. A shoulder-to-shoulder advance in health and in distress reveals itself as effective between men who certainly do not intend to reduce themselves to a common minimum, but to examine their own appeal to the utmost.

Nevertheless, this respect born of shoulder-to-shoulder struggle may offer some illusions as to its depth. For it may happen, in the course of a common search, that the believer hides from the others certain keys, of which he nevertheless makes use in their proper perspective. He does not wish to impose on the non-believer the sight of imaginary doors nor the usage of keys which could not be employed by him. He thinks he is acting in the domain of humanism, which would place in question neither motivations, nor religious interests. This situation is frequent, but often too we refuse to admit to ourselves the implicitly Christian impregnation of conduct that is explicitly presented as purely human. Our timidity in this area of religious affirmation no longer represents the respect for another, but an efficacious method of intimidation, whose origin is very difficult to identify. Our discretion becomes an evasion, a disquieting esotericism, an abusive safeguard, which places explanations out of reach, but whose effects nevertheless concern everyone. There is here no calculation, but a simple refusal to admit to oneself the weight of effective situations. But would not the recognition of the enthusiasms and the blindnesses that these imply be always preferable to the affirmation of their innocence and their impartiality?

This recognition has little chance of occurring, for if the believer gladly deceives himself in regard to the comfortable and impregnable aspect of his respect, the non-believer is scarcely induced to interrogate himself on the "hidden garden" of the Christian, since it does not concern their common work. In this way respect for the ignorance and indifference of the non-believer fits

into the believer's retreat back to his precious world of mystery. A lack of communication, despite all the externals of mutually respectful liberty, is thus sealed off between them. Like the two sides of a mould, they fit snugly together, but only their borders coincide. Between them we find an unexplored vacuum. Occasionally, however, the sides bruise each other. Believers and non-believers imagine that it is only some local disturbance but it may well betray the whole equilibrium of their relationship. Finally, those who believed themselves in agreement, turn their backs on each other in bitterness and reveal a "reversal of the soul" which up to then had been unconsciously hidden.

History is marked by these shoulder-to-shoulder relationships followed by complete alienation. Thus Christians and non-Christians, who both call themselves humanists and revolutionaries, rediscover themselves as brother enemies. Brutally, the believer discloses himself in the last analysis as a man submitted to mysterious and strange imperatives: the authority of the Church, the letter of the Bible, presuppositions in regard to nature and the sacred, an immense mould in which the non-believer senses an atmosphere swarming with rotting life, which appears poisonous to him, whereas until this time he had felt that he breathed the same air under the same sky as the rest of men. For his part the non-Christian gives the appearance of a man living in an overly willful world, too simply reduced to his own dimensions, or too enigmatic, given over to unknown powers. The Christian takes negations or parodies or blasphemies, precisely in that area in which the non-believer is concerned more with increasing man's measure than in killing God. The atheist for his part experiences the absence of man in supernatural actions, by which the Christian wishes, on the contrary, to indicate the true dimension of man in his encounters with God.<sup>7</sup>

Doubtless we have dramatized an experience which most habitually is resolved by auto-justification and by irritated or amused disaffection. But it ought to make us sense, in the existence of a spiritual Christendom, the major danger for a common work, even though it be in areas which in appearance are not theological or metaphysical.

Believers and unbelievers have thus the task of fighting against the unconscious erection of a secret in themselves which would exile the other, breaking all fraternity by giving first emphasis to oneself. On this side of testimony, but beyond the mistrustful practices of "respect," the problem of communication continually presents itself within the bosom of a common enterprise. In this sense we are invited to battle against what I have called "spiritualist Christendom," which treats Christianity as its capital, which we refuse to expose in the market of human exchange. This spiritual capitalism (so congenital to western Christians) is more subtle than political or even moral capitalism. It is only the stronger for that. It is exactly the opposite of evangelical poverty and generosity, all of whose appearances it nevertheless assumes. It forbids itself the coarseness of powerful interventions, or legalistic commands, but it arrogates to itself at the outset this interior control that the others seek to obtain. It creates initiates and exiles, it avoids brothers. In practice it makes of the Christian someone who externally is completely defenseless but yet remains a rich man in his own soul, but who with the true perversity of the

rich calls himself poor and perhaps believes it. But his wealth is there, discouraging us from combatting it to the same degree that it is veiled with humility. This spiritual capitalism kills communication. Like other capitalisms it intimidates and divides. The only remedy, here as elsewhere, is to strip oneself, to make a total gift and to agree to battle together on the plane of equality.

Here the unaffected observation of the non-believer can have an immensely helpful effect. For the Christian affirmations on the possibility of pardon, the value of suffering, the election of Israel, the signification of mediation, the "submission" of the weak and the poor, are among the most important elements which constitute that interiority which, unless it is made explicit and presented in poverty, will sink into equivocation, and keep that very man at a distance whom it particularly wants to enlighten—if it does not humbug him or repel him. At the very least, it will give birth to misunderstandings, which by their sequel inflict wounds or cause separations. In such a context pardon becomes the sacrifice of those who have been insulted; the acceptance of suffering a submission to the given situation that has been mystically utilized; mediation becomes passivity, and silence becomes a refusal and a void. Israel faltering towards salvation to warn the Church against spiritual pride becomes the scapegoat of pharasaical Christendom, the weak and the poor are frozen into their exemplary role, the strong and rich are untaxed by their duties of state. In this way mystery much too easily degenerates into hoax. The believer needs a constant vigilance so that his spirituality does not enclose the non-believer in a ghetto much more subtle than that which the Christian himself senses in the modern world. This vigilance is especially necessary today when with political and moral forms of Christendom no longer popular, we seem to be in the midst of a strange success of spiritual Christendom in the extra-theological domains of the theatre, the novel, and the cinema. What if there were no atheists present to keep watch over this intrusion, and on occasion to express their irritation at it, if, persuaded that they were intervening in an area that was being kept out of their search, they no longer dared to confide in us the human reasons for this feeling? If they no longer had enough friendship for us to seek out their "subversive" reasons for it, and decided that the mystical oddities of believers were of no interest for this solely valid world of human co-existence, we would run the risk of seeing the development and spread of a deceiving and self-deceived spiritualist Christendom. Did not St. Paul already say of the spirituality of the Corinthians: "I would prefer to say five words with my intelligence, in order to instruct others in this way, than to say ten thousand words with my tongue."

**I**N THIS WAY the presence of the non-believer forces the Christian never to practice a false economy of rationalism in the name of mystery, or psychology in the name of the supernatural, of contradiction in the name of reversibility, of continuity in the name of miracle, or man in general, out of deference to God. This necessity is helpful to us. It is not only pedagogical, it is fundamental. We would gladly say that it is just this which will save the faith and religion of Christianity from a spiritualist Christendom.

I am not in a position to speak of the interest or possible opportunity which common work with believers might have for non-believers. But I would like to conclude by saying that in a common world, which would represent a recognition of man by man, the business of the non-believer is surely to provoke each of us to become adult, to take hold of himself and place full value in his acts; and the task of the believer is to recall to everyone that he who wishes to save his life must lose it.

For myself, I would wish that both one and the other be exposed to the same choices that must be continually renewed, to the same indispensable re-questionings, to the same contesting of themselves.

I wish also that every differentiation be dialectic and that each voice exist to its fullest so that it be heard by the other.

I would wish that with the death of the various forms of Christendom, Christians and non-Christians, sharing each other's secrets, might be able not only to work together, but also to desire their reciprocal presence.

*Translated by JOSEPH E. CUNNEEN*

<sup>1</sup> We are always using "Christendom" in a pejorative sense. In this we follow Henri Marrou's description of it as "the millenium heresy," which consists in advancing the date of the new Jerusalem from the eschatological future to the present or the immediate future of history (*Esprit*, Dec. 1950, p. 989). Christendom is thus a strange way of doing witness to the Gospel with the conquest of the world. This is what the devil proposed to Jesus at the temptation in the desert.

<sup>2</sup> We are told that the United States is in the process of dechristianization. Its democracy is losing its Christian basis. Nevertheless, (according to the interview given by McCrea-Calvert, general secretary of the Council of the Churches of Christ, which groups 45 million American Protestants), "never in the course of history" have there been so many Church members in America. A hundred years ago, only one in fifteen was personally inscribed in a parish; today one half of the population are church members. Although less rapid than a generation ago, the statistical increase remains greater from year to year than the over-all growth of the population." Do we not frequently see that, at the same time that Christendom seems to advance, Christianity itself grows weaker?

<sup>3</sup> We are only taking a few examples without treating this Christian "naturalism" properly by any means. We would have to see if it does not come especially from the influence of Greek philosophy, which considers nature at once as a copy of divine essences (Platonism) and as the depository of divine seeds (Aristotelianism). An hebraic Christianity would perhaps confer less substantive value on nature and life, and emphasize their concrete and changing reality.

<sup>4</sup> We must here cite the Buddhist temptation for the western world, which has lost the certainty of its own values; perhaps we may see if respect for life becomes the common minimum that we would wish to save from the wreckage.

<sup>5</sup> I do not wish to simplify any problem of conscience, but to recall, for our common meditation, the story of that baby that was born hideously deformed, and who was allowed to die of hunger during a day and a half in a Paris hospital, in order not to take away a life, which in fact would have been a long inhuman suffering.

<sup>6</sup> These citations are taken from *Bulletin des Amis d'Emmanuel Mounier*, Oct. 1952.

<sup>7</sup> Examples: Ricoeur sees the authenticity of his faith annihilated in Sartre's *Le diable et le Bon Dieu*. For their part, the reviewers of *Temps Modernes* declare themselves unable to find any human intelligibility in the works of Eliot, the novels of Greene, Bernanos' *Fearless Heart*, etc.

# ON THE "NEGATIVE" ELEMENT IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THOMAS AQUINAS

JOSEF PIEPER

*Perceiving the Unexpressed*

**W**E DO NOT TALK about the obvious; what is self-evident need not be put in words. The only question is just what it is that is self-evident and so may remain unsaid.

This seemingly harmless state of affairs contains the greatest difficulty in all textual interpretation. For in the text to be interpreted there are things that remain unsaid as self-evident which to the interpreter are not self-evident at all—things which he therefore does not perceive along with the rest, so that even what he does perceive takes on a different color for him. The decisive point in the interpretation of a text—especially one stemming from a distant civilization or epoch—is just this: to grasp the fundamental self-evidences, which, themselves unspoken, are interwoven with that which is expressed—to discover, so to speak, the invisible musical clef governing what is explicitly stated. It has been rightly said that the doctrine of a thinker consists precisely in "what his sayings leave unsaid"; so says Heidegger, opening with these words his interpretation of a text by Plato. While the formulation may be too sharply pointed, this much is clear: an interpretation that does not reach what the saying of a text leaves unsaid must remain at bottom simply mistaken, however learned be its explanation of what is said expressly and in so many words (in fact, such interpretation may be all the worse for its learnedness!)

But how can we track down these ideas that are not expressed, not formulated in the text? There are divers ways of discovery. One of them surely is the following, which has served me well on many occasions: unexpressed ideas can often be discerned—as if through a gap, a crevice in the structure—by an apparent disconnectedness in the trend of thought, a lack of consequence in the line of argument; in any case, it appears to be a gap to us, the interpreters, who in our own way are accustomed to think on the basis of self-evidences that are equally unexpressed and perhaps not even formally thought through. What matters is only that we must be sure to keep on puzzling long enough whenever we encounter such seeming inconsistencies.

*The Hidden Clef: "Creation"*

**I**N THE PHILOSOPHY of Thomas Aquinas, an unexpressed basic idea, determining nearly every one of the structural concepts of his world view, is the idea of Creation—more precisely, the idea that there is nothing that is not

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*creatura* (except the Creator Himself); and that this createdness completely and entirely determines the inner structure of the *creatura*.

It may seem, of course, quite obvious and not really worth mentioning (and certainly in no way surprising) that in the thinking of a medieval theologian the concept of creation should occupy the center of his strictly philosophical world view as well. What might seem strange is rather that we are supposed to be dealing here with an *unexpressed* premise, a view which is not explicitly formulated and which we, so to speak, must read between the lines. Has not St. Thomas worked out a doctrine of creation in all fullness and detail? That is true, to be sure, and also quite generally known. But it is equally true and yet far from generally known that the concept of creation determines the inner structure of nearly all the basic concepts of the philosophical ontology of Thomas Aquinas. And this structural determination by the concept of creation is precisely *not* manifest; in all his works it is hardly ever stated explicitly; it belongs among what has been left unsaid in St. Thomas' ontology. This element could go unnoticed to such a degree that, I dare say, even scholastic interpretation of St. Thomas barely makes mention of it. Scholastic Thomistic studies, to be sure, are largely conditioned by the philosophy of the Enlightenment—not the least proof of which is that on precisely this point they kept a silence which was bound to lead, and did lead, to portentous misunderstandings. For instance, we misunderstand the meaning of such statements as "All that is, is good," or "All that is, is true"—we misunderstand, I believe, the so-called "transcendental" concepts (in the old sense), unless we see that these statements and concepts mean not a "neutral" existence in the sense of mere presence, not an *ens ut sic*, not a faceless world of "objects"—but mean formally existence *qua creatura*. The idea that things are good by virtue of being, and that this goodness is identical with their existence and not an added attribute; that, further, the word "true" is a genuine synonym of "existent," so that all that is is good *qua* existent, and not first existent and then also true in addition: these ideas, which beyond a doubt belong to the stock in trade of classical-occidental ontology and which in St. Thomas have found their brilliant formulation, simply lose their flavor if we fail formally to conceive all that exists, and all things, as *creatura*. Those ideas then become shallow, sterile, tautological—and such, indeed, and for this very reason, has been their fate.

And this brings us to our subject: that St. Thomas' doctrine of truth can be grasped in its essential and profoundest meaning only if we formally take account of the concept of creation. And the connection of the concept of truth with the concept of unknowable, of mystery—the connection with which we propose to deal—this connection becomes visible only against the background of the idea that everything that can become object of human knowledge is either *creatura* or Creator.

#### *Truth as Thought-creation*

**I**T IS IMPOSSIBLE, of course, to present here St. Thomas' entire doctrine of truth in all its reaches. Nor is this necessary in order to make clear the burden of our reflection. Our exposition will be confined essentially to the concept of the truth of *things*, the *veritas rerum*, the "ontological" truth as

scholastic philosophy distinguishes it from "logical" or epistemological truth. But it is already not quite correct to separate these two concepts of truth too sharply from each other; to St. Thomas, they belong immediately together. For instance, St. Thomas would not agree with the standard modern objection (raised again and again, from Bacon to Kant), that it is not possible to call true that which is real, but strictly and essentially only that which is thought. He would reply, true, only what is thought is in the strict sense "true"; but the real things are, precisely, thought! It is in fact of the very essence of things, St. Thomas would continue, that they are thought; they are real by virtue of being thought; in fact, one should say more precisely they are creatively thought, that is, thought-created. And this must be taken quite literally, not just as an image. — And since things themselves are thoughts and have "word-character" (in Guardini's phrase), therefore they can, in exact and legitimate usage, be called "true"—just like all other thoughts.

St. Thomas could hardly have separated the idea that things possess a whatness, a specific essence, from the thought that this essence of things is the fruit of a planning, thinking, creating intellect.

Modern thinking is far from making that connection. We think that we can very well speak of the "essence" of plants, and of the "essence" of man, *without* feeling the need to conceive of these essences as "thought-created"; modern intellectual usage is rather remote from the idea that such essences could not exist except as "thought-created." And yet, in the strangest manner, St. Thomas' thesis has very recently received a support that is as unexpected as it is emphatic: in the basic tenets of contemporary and, actually, quite ultra-modern existentialism. From Sartre, from his radical denial of the concept of creation—it was Sartre who said that "existentialism is nothing else but the effort to draw *out* all the consequences of a consistent atheistic position"—from his approach it suddenly becomes once more demonstrable that, and why, the doctrine of creation is in fact the hidden but indeed sustaining basis of classical-occidental ontology. If we were to reduce both Sartre's thought and that of St. Thomas to the form of a syllogism, it would result that both start from exactly the same *mejor* premise: an essence of things exists only insofar as it is thought-created.

Both Sartre and St. Thomas also distinguish emphatically between the *immediate, primary* reality of the *res naturales*, and the *derivative, secondary* reality of artificial things. This distinction, too, seems to be characteristic of both pre-modern and contemporary, ultra-modern thinking, while modern thought tends not to stress the distinction (and probably deems itself especially "realistic" for it), and to look upon forest, stream, and meadow as well as village, bridge, and factory as the *single* reality, "our" reality. But Sartre, we have said, distinguishes most emphatically. The difference, he says, is that artificial things have an essence, natural things have not; we can speak of the essence of a paper knife (his favorite example), because artificial things are thought out, thought-produced by man. Because there is man and his intellect which can plan and think out a paper knife—and has done so—because and only because of this is there an "essence" of a paper knife. And, he continues, because there is no intellect which, with a prior purpose in mind, has planned and thought

out the things of nature, in particular man himself, therefore there is no essence of the things that are not-made, not-artificial. I quote verbatim: "*Il n'y a pas de nature humaine puisqu'il n'y a pas de Dieu pour la concevoir*"—"There is no human nature because there is no God to conceive it." While St. Thomas says: *Because* and *insofar* as God has conceived the things, *therefore* and *insofar* do they have an essence. We see, then, that Sartre and St. Thomas hold in common the premise that one can speak of a nature of things only if the things are explicitly understood as *creatura*. From the point of view of the old ontology, Sartre is here entirely in the right; he is equally in the right when he accuses the philosophical atheism of the 18th century of inconsistency in abandoning the idea of creation, but not abandoning at the same time the habit of talking, as if nothing had changed, of a "nature of things." To think that things have a nature which is given *a priori*, which is prior to their existence, and not to think at the same time that things are *creatura*: that is shallow, impossible, absurd. Thus, rightly, Sartre.

This digression has already run a little ahead of our argument—yet without going too far afield. For what St. Thomas has in mind when he speaks of the truth which dwells in existent things is precisely this—that the things are thought-created by the Creator.

### *Things Are Knowable Because They Are Creatura*

**T**HE BASIC TENET of St. Thomas' doctrine of the truth of things is found in the *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate* (1, 2): *Res naturalis inter duos intellectus constituta [est]*—"the natural thing [is] placed between two intellects," to wit, St. Thomas continues, between the *intellectus divinus* and the *intellectus humanus*.

With this situation of the real between the absolute, creatively thinking knowledge of God and the imitative, "conforming" knowledge of man, the constitution of the whole of reality presents itself as a structure of inter-connected originals and imitations. St. Thomas here employs the concept of "measure" (which, in this non-quantitative sense, is age-old and presumably Pythagorean), of that which measures and that which is measured. The creative knowledge of God measures and is not measured (*mensurans non mensuratum*); natural things are both measured and measuring (*mensuratum et mensurans*); human knowledge is measured and not measuring (*mensuratum non mensurans*)—not, that is, the measure of the thing of nature, although it is the measure of the *res artificiales* (this is where the distinction between created things and man-made things becomes important for St. Thomas).

In accordance with the double relatedness of things—so St. Thomas develops his doctrine—there is a double concept of the "truth of things." The first states their being thought-created by God, the second their intelligibility to the human intellect. "Things are true," then, signifies first that things are creatively known by God, and second that things are in themselves accessible and intelligible to human knowledge. But between the first and the second concept of truth there exists a relation of essential priority, *prioritas naturae*. This priority has a twofold meaning: *first*, that the core of the concept "truth of things" cannot be grasped, that it would simply be missed, if we do not

explicitly think of things as *creatura*—brought forth by the thought-creating intellect of God, or, as early Egyptian ontology expressed the same thought, issued from the “eye of God”; and *second*, that the fact that things are thought-created by God is the *cause* of their intelligibility to man. These two relations, then, are to each other not like an older to a younger brother, so to speak, but like father to son: the first begot the second. What does this mean? It means that things are knowable *because* God has thought them into being; things, being thought-created by God, not only have *their* nature (“for themselves alone,” so to speak), but, being thought-created by God, things also have an existence “for us.” Things have their intelligibility, their inner lucidity, their luminosity, their manifestness because of the fact that God has thought-created them: because of this they are essentially intellectual. The lucidity and brightness which flows into things from the creative knowledge of God at the same time as their existence (nay, *as* their very existence)—this lucidity alone renders existing things visible to human knowledge. In a commentary to *1 Tim.*, 6, 4, St. Thomas says: “As much actuality as a thing has, so much light it has.” And in one of his late works, the *Commentary to the Liber de Causis* (1, 6), there is a deep statement that couches the same thought in something not unlike a mystical formula: *Ipsa actualitas rei est quoddam lumen ipsius*—the actuality of things is itself their light: the actuality of things understood as their createdness! And it is this light which makes the things visible to our eyes—which means that things are knowable because they are created! (At this point, we might express an objection to the epistemology, similar to the objection which Sartre raised against the philosophy of the eighteenth century and its talk about the nature of things: Let no one believe he could think away the thought-createdness of things by God and yet go on understanding how man’s knowledge of things is possible!)

*Things Are Unfathomable Because They Are *Creatura**

**B**UT WE MEANT to speak about *unknowability* as an element of the very concept of truth. We found that, according to St. Thomas, one may in the realm of created natural reality speak of “truth” in two different senses. First, we may refer to the truth of *things*, which consists primarily in that the things, *qua creatura*, correspond to the original, creative knowledge of God: it is this very correspondence which formally constitutes the truth of things. Second, we may speak of truth with a view to human *knowledge*; this knowledge is true by virtue of corresponding “measure-receiving”—to the *a priori* given objective reality of things. And it is again this correspondence itself which formally constitutes the truth of human knowledge.

In the *Summa Theologiae*, these two concepts of truth are found formulated and juxtaposed within the same *articulus*: “If the things are the measure and yardstick of the intellect, truth consists in the intellect conforming to the things... But if the intellect is the yardstick and measure of things, then truth consists in things conforming to the intellect.” (I, 21, 2). These statements, again, express from a new viewpoint the structure of all created being, which is essentially placed between the thought-creative intellect of God and the imitating intellect of man—a thought of unsoundable depth!

Between the two correspondences (of intellect to reality, and of reality to intellect) which both, as "adaequatio," mean truth in their different ways—between the two correspondences there is this fundamental difference: that the one of them may become the object of human knowledge but not the other, that the one is humanly intelligible and the other is not. Man is fully capable of knowing not only the things, but also the correspondence between the things and his own idea of them. That is to say: beyond his naive perception of things, man is capable of knowing things in judgment and reflection. Human knowledge, in other words, not only can be true, it can also be a knowledge of the truth (*Summa Theologiae*, I, 16, 2).

But the correspondence of things to the creative knowledge of God, which primarily and most essentially constitutes the truth of things that in turn renders human knowledge possible (*cognitio est veritatis effectus*—this is another of those formulations in St. Thomas' *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*, I, 1, which turns a customary formulation upside down: knowledge a fruit of truth, precisely of the truth of things)—this correspondence, I say, which constitutes the "truth of things"; the correspondence between natural reality and the original, creative knowledge of God; this correspondence itself is beyond our formal knowledge! We can know the things, but not formally their truth; we know the image, but not its correspondence to the original, not the correspondence between the thought-creation and the thought-created; this correspondence which formally constitutes the "truth of things" we cannot know. Here, then, it becomes clear how truth and unknowability belong together.

But this thought still needs to be expressed with greater precision. "Unknowability," in common usage, has several and at least two meanings. It may signify that something is of such a nature that in itself it is generally accessible to knowledge—but that a certain intellect, nonetheless, is incapable of grasping it because that intellect is not sufficiently penetrating. In this sense we speak of objects that are "not visible to the naked eye"—a failure of the eye rather than an objective peculiarity of the thing: the stars which we do not see are in "themselves" quite visible. "Unknowability" in this sense means that the intellect does not suffice to realize the objectively given possibility of knowing. But "unknowability" may also mean that no such possibility of knowing exists; that, in a manner of speaking, there is nothing to be known; it is not just that the knowing subject lacks sufficient power to perceive and penetrate—the object itself lacks intelligibility. But unknowability in this second sense—*intrinsic unknowability of something real*—is a notion which to St. Thomas is unthinkable. For since all that is is *creatura*—that is, thought-created by God—therefore all that is is in itself luminous, bright, manifest: luminous by virtue of *being!* Unknowability, therefore, can to St. Thomas never mean that there could exist something which is in itself inaccessible and dark; it can mean only that although there is light, it exceeds the power of comprehension, escapes the grasp of understanding.—This is the sense in which we here speak of unknowability, and we assert that this unknowability is part and parcel of the notion of the truth of things. In other words, we assert that it is of the essence of things, *qua creatura*, that their knowability cannot be exhausted by a finite intellect, because the cause of this knowability (manifestness, luminosity) has at the same time of necessity caused the unfathomable character of things!

Let us look more closely.

"Things are true"—that means, we have seen, primarily that things are thought-created by God. To begin with, this statement would be totally misunderstood if it were to be taken solely as a statement about God—for instance, as a mere statement about God's activity in respect of things. No, this sentence concerns the structure of *things*: it expresses the thought of St. Augustine that the things exist because God sees them (while we see the things because they exist); it states that the essence of things consists in their being thought-created by the Creator. As we have said, the statement is another name for "being," a synonym for "real"; *ens et verum convertuntur*; it is all the same to speak of "something real" and of "something thought-created by God." It is the essence of all existing things (*qua creatura*) that they are formed after an original which resides in the absolute creative knowledge of God. In his Commentary to John (1, 2) St. Thomas says: "*Creatura in Deo est creatrix essentia*"— "The created is in God creative essence," and in the *Summa Theologiae* (I, 14, 12 ad 3): "Everything real possesses the truth of its essence insofar as it imitates the knowledge of God."

But to return to the problem at hand. The relation of correspondence between the original within God and the created imitation—which formally and primarily constitutes the truth of things—can never, we have said, be grasped as such by us directly. We can never occupy a point of vantage from which we could compare the original with the imitation: we are flatly incapable of witnessing, as onlookers, so to speak, the origin of things from "the eye of God." And because this is so, our understanding, as soon as it seeks to learn the essence of things, even the lowest and "simplest," enters upon a path which in principle has no end. It has no end because things are *creatura*, that is, because their inner lucidity has its original source in the boundless light of Divine knowledge. This fact is given, we have said, in the concept of the truth of being as St. Thomas formulated it—a concept whose full depth becomes visible, however, only when its connection with the concept of creation is understood: and this connection was to St. Thomas self-evident.

#### *Philosophia Negativa*

**I**N THIS CONCEPT OF TRUTH, so understood, the element of unknowability—the element of *philosophia negativa* with which we now have to deal more specifically—has its legitimate locus and origin. To be sure, our interpretation does not blend into the traditional picture of the "scholastic" St. Thomas. For supposedly it is both characteristic of and essential for scholasticism and St. Thomas—and especially St. Thomas—that natural reason is deemed adequate not only to construct a self-sustaining philosophy, but even to bring the truths of faith by conclusive argument into a compelling and structurally perfect "system." How this misinterpretation and misunderstanding have come about historically cannot be explained in a few words. No doubt several causes contributed in a highly complex manner, beginning with the Augustinian (or, better, Augustinistic) distrust of nature and *ratio* which inspired the reformers of the 16th century, and ending with the concern of neo-scholasticism to keep the Master, Thomas, clear of any suspicion of "agnosticism." But whatever the

causes and motives—there is a whole family of statements of St. Thomas which are hardly ever found in expositions of his doctrine: even the formulations of this negative element are rarely found.

We are dealing here only with the *philosophia negativa* of St. Thomas. He also formulated the principles of a *theologia negativa*, which are as a rule equally passed over in silence, not to say suppressed, in most expositions. Only rarely do we find it mentioned that the doctrine of God in the *Summa Theologiae* begins with the statement: "We cannot know what God is; we can know what He is *not*." I have not encountered one text-book on Thomistic philosophy which had found room for the thought St. Thomas expressed in his *Commentary on Boethius' De Trinitate* (1, 2, ad 1), that there are three degrees of human knowledge of God: the lowest, to know God as Him who is active in creation; the second, to know Him in the reflection of spiritual essence; and the highest, to know Him as the Unknown—*Deum tamquam ignotum!* Not to mention the statement in the *Quaestiones Disputatae de Potentia Dei* (7, 5, ad 14): "This is the ultimate of man's knowledge of God—to know that we do not know God"—*quod sciatur se Deum nescire!*

Concerning, then, the negative element in the philosophy of St. Thomas, it is true, of course, that this statement about the philosopher (whose intellectual efforts had not sufficed even to understand the essence of a single fly) is found in the almost popularly written explanations of the *Symbolum Apostolicum*, and this may be the reason why it is hardly ever cited in learned treatises. But the statement is in a rather closely-knit connection with many other statements, all of which together circumscribe a concept of philosophy that, if formulated sharply, does in fact formally rule out the notion of a complete philosophical system. If a philosophical question can be defined by the fact that it asks for the deepest roots, the ultimate meaning, in short, for the "essence" of something ("What is this thing, ultimately and at bottom?")—then, according to St. Thomas' concept of philosophy, it is in the nature of the question that it cannot be answered in the same sense as it is asked; in a word, that it cannot be answered adequately. By a comprehensive knowledge, St. Thomas means this: to know a thing to the extent to which it is in itself knowable; to convert the knowability of the thing, without residue, into knowledge, so that there is nothing left in the thing, which is not *actu* known. Now what the philosophical question, by its very nature, aims for is an answer that is comprehensive in this sense; no other answer would be adequate. And such an answer is not possible—*because the knowability of being, which is here to be converted into knowledge, consists in the thought-createdness of that same being by the Creator!* Comprehensive knowledge, and thus an adequate answer to the question of the philosopher, is not possible because human knowledge, addressing itself to the essence of things, falls into a chasm of light, the bottom of which is God Himself.

Science is free to limit itself to the realm of that which can be positively known. As long as I ask for the chemical make-up of the cell-substance of this piece of wood, or for the structure of the atom, so long I remain within the realm of that which can in principle be answered definitively or which, at any rate, is not in principle unanswerable. But as soon as I ask "What is this

thing?", and do not answer that it is a table, or a tool, or a piece of wood, but "This is matter," or "This is something real" (what does that mean, "something real?") —as soon as I do so I am dealing formally with the unfathomable and unknowable. Philosophy does deal formally with the unknowable, because it is in the nature of the philosophical question to ask for the root of things, and thereby to penetrate to the dimension of their thought-createdness by the Creator, that is, to the dimension of creaturehood.

This explains how St. Thomas, in his Commentary to the *Metaphysics*, can say with Aristotle himself: The knowledge with which metaphysics is concerned, the knowledge of the essence of things, belongs to man not as a possession but as a loan: *non ut possessio, sed sicut aliquid mutuatum*; and why St. Thomas has no objection whatever to Aristotle's thesis (proclaimed with a most un-Aristotelian pomp) that the question of being is a question "raised since always and today and forever."

Yet there are some much more "negative" formulations in St. Thomas. There is, for instance, the following: "The essential principles of things are unknown to us"—"Principia essentialia rerum sunt nobis ignota" (Commentary to Aristotle's *De Anima* 1, 1; nr. 15). This statement is far less unusual and exceptional than might at first appear. It would be easy to match it with a dozen similar ones, from the *Summa Theologiae*, the *Summa contra Gentiles*, or from *De Veritate* and other *Quaestiones Disputatae*. All of them state that we do not really know the essence of things; which, St. Thomas says, is also the reason why we are unable to give things an essential name, but must take names from outward accidentals (in support of which St. Thomas then often offers those hopeless medieval etymologies, such as that *lapis* is derived from *laedere pedem*).

Why, after all—so St. Thomas once asks (*De Ver. 5, 2 ad 11*)—why is it impossible for us to know God perfectly through His creation? The answer has two parts, of which the second is of special interest for us here. The first part of the answer is: Creation reflects God only imperfectly. The second part: Owing to the dullness and stupidity of our intellect (*imbecilitas intellectus nostri*) we are incapable of drawing from things even what information about God they do indeed contain. To understand the full weight of this formulation, we must recall that, in St. Thomas' view, the special *essence* of a thing is the special manner in which it reflects Divine protection. This thought, which in turn points toward an entirely new and complex set of problems, has a very precise relation to our theme: for it means that the essence of things themselves remains at bottom inaccessible to us just because we are incapable of grasping the image, *qua* image, of the Divine original.

This two-part answer has a plainly dialectical structure, reflecting the structure of the *creatura* itself (also made up of thesis and antithesis) which, by definition, has its origin both in God and in nothingness. (This is why St. Thomas says, not only that the reality of things is their light, but also: *creatura est tenebra in quantum est ex nihilo*—Creatures are darkness insofar as they are from nothing; this statement is *not* Heidegger's but St. Thomas', *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*, 18, 2 ad 5.) And the answer to the question, Why can we not know God fully through creation?, has the same recalcitrant

structure. For how is it put? It is put: Things, through their essence, express God only imperfectly. Why? Because things are *creatura*, and *creatura* cannot express the Creator perfectly. Nonetheless, the answer continues, the luminosity of even this imperfect expression surpasses human understanding. Why? Because things, being thought-created by God, reflect in their being an infinite light—which means, again, because things are *creatura*.

*The Hope-Structure of Creaturely Knowledge*

**W**E HAVE SPOKEN of the "negative" element in the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. Now we become aware how and why this formulation is misleading, and that it stands in need of sharper expression, not to say correction. What is "negative" is not, at any rate, that human knowledge does not reach to the essence of things. "*Intellectus... penetrat usque rei essentiam*"—"the intellect penetrates to the essence of things": this statement of the *Summa Theologiae* (I, II, 31, 5) remains valid for St. Thomas, *in spite of* the other statement that the philosopher's intellectual effort did not suffice to understand a single fly. The two statements in fact belong together! That the power of the intellect does reach things is proved precisely by the fact that the intellect falls into the unfathomable chasm of light—this happens to the intellect *because* and *as* it reaches the essence of things.

There can then be no question of agnosticism in St. Thomas; and neo-scholasticism is right in saying so emphatically. But it is, I believe, impossible to make clear the true cause of this situation without bringing the concept of creation formally into play, without speaking of the structure of things *qua creatura*; of this structure which means that things, being thought-created by the Creator, have *both* their essential luminosity and manifestness, and their unfathomableness and "inexhaustibility": both their knowability and their "unknowability." Unless we go back to this foundation, it is not possible, I believe, to show why the "negative" element in the philosophy of St. Thomas has nothing to do with agnosticism. If we try to do without this basic idea, we shall needs be exposed to the danger—as the example of many a neo-scholastic attempt at systematization shows—of interpreting St. Thomas as a rationalist, and thus misinterpreting him altogether.

In fact, the position of St. Thomas cannot be reduced to any "ism." One might perhaps say that it gives expression to the—essentially forever elusive—*hope-structure* of the existence of man as a being who is capable of knowledge: neither simply knowing and "having," nor simply "not-having,"—but "not-yet-having." Man is conceived as a traveler, one who is on the way; that means, first, that his steps have meaning, they are not in principle futile, they do lead nearer the goal. And this, in turn, is unthinkable without that other element: **so long as man, in his existence, is "on the way," just so long the way of his knowledge is without an end.** And this hope-structure of the quest for the essence of things, for philosophic knowledge, springs from the fact—let it be said again—that the world (the world and knowing man himself) is *creatura*. In St. Thomas' philosophy, too, must be taken on the basis of a wider affirma-

But since hope is closer to the Yes! than to the No!, the "negative" element

tion. The unknowability of the essence of things is, surely, implied in the concept of the truth of being; but it is so far from meaning objective inaccessibility, reticence, darkness of things that, on the contrary, this seeming paradox may be stated: Things are ultimately unknowable to man *because* they are too luminous—because they are too knowable.

And, indeed, St. Thomas has himself explicitly underlined the affirmation in Aristotle's famous statement about the eyes of the night-bird that cannot see the brightest things, like to man's intellect which fails before the most manifest things. St. Thomas fully accepts this thought of Aristotle, in that marvellous phrase of his *Commentary on Metaphysics* (2, 1): "*Solem etsi non videat oculus nycticoracis, videt tamen eum oculus aquilae*"—"Even though the eye of the night-bird does not see the sun, yet the eye of the eagle sees it."

*Translated by FRED WIECK*

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# THE UNITY OF PHILOSOPHY

LUIGI PAREYSON

**T**HE HISTORIAN of philosophy cannot avoid encountering a difficulty which, if unresolved, will endanger and compromise all his efforts. If he holds that philosophy is one, he must account for the many and diverse philosophies which have succeeded one another on the stage of philosophical speculation. Should he insist on the wide differences the many philosophies display, he must be sure to enquire into the possible existence of an underlying and profound unity irreducible to the many and capable of binding them into one common idea. Is there, then, at one and the same time a unity of philosophy and a plurality of philosophies?

## *The Alternatives*

**S**OME HOLD that since truth is one and only one, philosophy too must be one and only one. Understood in this fashion philosophy is identified with human knowledge of truth in its entirety, and every philosopher is seen as striving for this one and only philosophy, in manifold ways, to be sure, yet forever open to false solutions or dissected, fragmentary visions of truth. Once the whole truth has been reached after much trial and error, everybody is obliged to accept that one philosophy which alone is capable of expressing and defining truth in its entirety. This one philosophy contains, actually and potentially, the solution to all problems; it satisfies all exigencies, and stands firm and unshakeable, beyond the continuing stream of history. Hence those philosophers who come later have no other task to perform than to contribute variations and improvements of detail; they must accept that one philosophy in its whole substance if they do not wish to become lost in the blind useless wanderings of reason. According to this view the one philosophy is the whole of philosophy, from then on declared definitive, while the other philosophies are not really worthy of their name for they are substantially in error even though truth is somehow mixed with them. In the face of these various philosophies the one true philosophy must simply reject and refute, unless those philosophies restrict themselves to inquiry, or a statement of philosophical requirements or hopes, in which case differences will be tolerated. Thus, while the act of philosophizing will be open and many-sided, the one philosophy will remain unique, for *verum unum, verisimilia multa, falsa infinita*.

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The various philosophies, thus gravely compromised, are given a more positive evaluation by those who see in them a progressive manifestation of truth, up to the point at which truth, having become fully conscious, identifies itself as an absolute philosophy. The many philosophies are seen as stages in the same process by which truth becomes conscious of itself; nor could truth reach such consciousness without passing through those moments or stages. Hence it is only by means of the many philosophies that the one true philosophy is achieved. Yet this does not suffice for, understood in themselves, the many philosophies are unilateral: they are false and lacking in actuality if isolated in their unilaterality, true and timely if integrated as internal articulations of the whole truth. This process is a substantially univocal ascent because it is ordained to end in an absolute philosophy. Hence the diversity of philosophies is only apparent. No one philosophy has any meaning in itself but only as a part of what is truly the one philosophy within which, systematically expressed, it is inscribed with a well determined place and possessed of an immutable function. Nor is it possible to deny that the process must be concluded and affirm instead its infinite openness because, once understood as univocal and marked by necessary transitions and a forced exit, every contemporary philosophy, precisely because it has been absolutized by necessity, will absorb all other philosophies, which are in themselves but partial truth, unilateral and no longer actual.

One may escape the contradiction between the historical and the definitive character of philosophy by saying that philosophies are always situated in an historical context. In such a situation, what properly deserves the name of a definitive philosophy is not a theory that has been reasoned out and expressed in a system but history itself in its infinite process, as a continuing evolution of historical situations and political action designed to transform the world. History is the one philosophy. It acts as the determining source of the many philosophies which derive their validity from the limited age in which they live. However, it is no longer philosophies that are expressed; we should rather speak of diverse ideologies. For a philosophy which is hostile to theory and inextricably bound up with history and political action, the many philosophies, in their theoretical expressions, are seen as simple ideologies, i.e. mere conceptualizations of all-determining historical conditions of existence. These ideologies may contribute to political transformations but are, in substance, super-structures, historical products of this *one philosophy* understood as action and history.

**T**HE THREE CASES that I have examined so far have this in common: they conceive of philosophy as knowledge of the whole truth, and as the only possibility so that the manifold philosophies vanish within the unicity of that one philosophy. Whatever the object of our discussion, whether it be the truth of the one philosophy as compared to the error of others, its actuality as compared to their partial character or its definitiveness, which makes other philosophies seem like super-structures, philosophy (understood as the one and only possibility) completely absorbs in itself the many and diverse. The one

philosophy alone exists. The others may claim to be philosophy only in so far as they are somehow included. And this they may accomplish, either by becoming absorbed through that fragment of their philosophy that has not yet been refuted as error, by contracting into a part whose proper place and truth can be found only in the whole, or by establishing themselves as superficial and transient manifestations of that activity which alone is real: history and political action.

In this way the manifold diversity of philosophies is but an appearance: for not only do these conceptions fail to explain, they indeed make it impossible to throw every philosophy open to the different interpretations that lie at the root of every knowing philosophical historiography. The several conceptions of truth presented are indeed suggestive: that of truth winding its way through errors and manifesting itself in the one true philosophy, that of the total truth articulating itself in the mobile progression of a varied and fluid systematization, and that of action, itself infinitely open, giving rise to infinitely many theories. But the conception of philosophy as the one and only possibility hardens and arrests the mobility of that infinitely open inquiry, because the critical evolution imposed on each philosophy is univocal, depending as it does upon the one philosophy that alone offers the truth, and in whose light only one true interpretation can be given of every single philosophy. The historian is thus obligated both to seek out and to accept this single interpretation. A philosophical historiography inspired by these criteria fails to respect the single philosophies in their solid autonomy and continual fruitfulness; instead it offers pre-formed schemata into which they are to be forced. In this way we are not offered a study of each philosophy in itself: we are given either a history of simple philosophical inquiry with all its vicissitudes and errors, a genealogy of the one contemporary philosophy, always capable of being completely transcribed in theoretical terms and of being classified as a system, or the investigation of the relations between philosophical thought and social and political history. Once this work has been accomplished, nothing more is to be said, for now every philosophy has been evaluated, systematized and definitely interpreted. And if, in respect to the one philosophy all the others are completely un-contemporary, what is the point of recalling them? That philosophical historiography which studies other philosophies without learning anything from them, be it polemical or dialectical, gives evidence of a merely cultural, scholarly or philological interest.

In conceiving the unity of philosophy as unicity not only are the manifold philosophies destroyed but the very unity of philosophy vanishes. For that which claims to be *the one* philosophy, exclusively true, contemporary and definitive, is in fact, but *one* among the many that succeed one another in the history of philosophical thinking. As it is but *one* of the many that present themselves as *the one* philosophy, it becomes impossible to contemplate, much less to achieve, the true unity of philosophy. In the vigorous movement of the *one* exclusive philosophy among the many, but to act as the representative of philosophical reason itself. Yet, by conceiving philosophy as knowledge of the whole truth, he has been led to present his own philosophy as the only his speculation no philosopher has ever aimed at absolutizing his thought as

one rather than to accept philosophy itself as a unity. As a result, in the place of *philosophy* we are offered but one of the many, and that one is absolutized. Actually, to consider philosophy as permitting one single expression is to relate the many philosophies to that one among them which, because absolute and privileged, is able to silence the others and reduce them all to the terms of its own synthesis. Accordingly, the multiplicity of philosophies, excluded on principle, is unconsciously presupposed since it is but *one of the philosophies* that is in fact absolutized. To conceive philosophy as knowledge of the whole truth and as its one and only expression is at once un-critical and dogmatic.

*The Relativity of Philosophical Doctrines*

**M**UST WE, THEN, sacrifice the unity of philosophy to the multiplicity of philosophies? An affirmative answer is advanced by those who hold that every philosophy expresses a point of view, and not only deny the possibility of one absolute and definitive philosophy on the grounds that every outlook, unmistakable and unrepeatable as it is, cannot be a unit in any plurality, much less a totality, but go further and insist that *I am* one with my point of view. Hence to clarify my situation I must profess my truth, i.e. the truth that *I myself am*. There are many philosophies because truths are many, and truths are many because the order of existence is diversified. According to this view every existence is at one and the same time a truth and a philosophy. My philosophy is not one among many because *my truth* is not, certainly from my point of view, just one *among many*: for me it is the only conceivable one. Hence it is that we cannot speak of either pluralism or unity in philosophy but must insist, on the contrary, on the exceptional, unique character of every philosophy. Every philosophy, then, is closed up within itself, unique and absolute, definitive and conclusive, for it excludes all other philosophies and is so exceptionally singular and isolated as to be absolutely incomunicable, untranslatable into a universal language and intelligible only through personal responses and invocations. Let us note that communication among philosophers does not yet constitute philosophy: involving as it does many existents rather than many philosophies it belongs to the order of life. In the act of philosophizing every person is clarifying his own self, developing the powers of his most individual situation, expressing his own life by means of concepts which in themselves are empty and inexpressive, and communicating through figurative language and allusions. Ultimately, every person conducts a monologue, imprisoned by his own situation, and is faced with no other alternative than to understand his limitations with greater depth and clarity.

The communicability and intelligibility of the many philosophies, gravely compromised by this attack, is safeguarded by those who see in such philosophies different conceptions of the world. Shaped by the world, these philosophies are for that very reason marked with an original and inner intelligibility and are open to anyone who is capable of re-experiencing them, by understanding and reconstructing their structural unity. It is possible to achieve a point of view according to which the diverse philosophies may be embraced without the necessity of professing any particular one. It is also possible to discern a uniform intelligibility in them and appreciate their validity, for they

are all situated on the same plane and are equally relativized by the concrete point of view and particular situation from which they arise. This conception is sharply critical of all the other philosophies as it accentuates both historical relativity and the personal situation. As regards itself, however, it is not critical at all: while anxious not to adopt any particular philosophy precisely because it wishes to understand and justify all of them, one is nevertheless presupposed and tacitly assumed, namely, a metaphysic of necessity. Since each person can have only that conception of philosophy which he does have, all conceptions become equally necessary and indifferent. This position might be of some value were it to stop considering itself a philosophy and restrict itself rather to describing the forms of human civilization. Such an interest is indeed very noble and indispensable for every kind of understanding, yet in itself neither produces a specific philosophical understanding nor is capable of initiating among the diverse philosophies a truly philosophical communion.

Indeed, having gone thus far, is it still possible to speak of philosophy as an autonomous and distinct knowledge founded on pure concepts? Once the historical-personal conditional character of philosophy has been discovered how can one still philosophize? Indeed, since philosophy is always relative to the particular situation within which it arises, whoever decides to philosophize with the intention of achieving a universally valid systematic conceptual explanation of reality mistakes the temporal for the eternal. If this is done unconsciously such a person sins by ingenuousness; if consciously, he is engaging in mystification. Hence today, with criticism refined to the point of relativizing philosophy through its historical context—i.e. unconscious naivete no longer being possible—there is no way of escaping mystification except by a renunciation of philosophy and an insistence on its impossibility, by showing how easily it becomes reduced either to critical thought or to a methodological consciousness proper to each determinate human action and knowledge. Now, apart from the fact that whoever formulates such statements presupposes, without any critical foundation, the one and only one view of philosophy at once total, absolute and definitive, and unconsciously contemplates it with nostalgia, in thus deducing a theory from the simple *fact* of the multiplicity of philosophies, mistakes theory for consequence of fact rather than solution to problems. In this way facts are not seen as problematic; but are, on the contrary, idolized as data to be imposed and suffered.

**I**N THESE LAST three conceptions the historical and personal relativity of each philosophy is so accentuated that the unity of philosophy becomes completely sacrificed to the multiplicity of philosophical systems. The various philosophies are wanting in universality. They are either incomunicable or intelligible only as statements of *Weltanschauungen* relative to their own time; the only unity that binds them is the unity of human life, not that of a specific philosophical reason which unites them in one common task.

That such a view completely compromises the unity of philosophy may be clearly seen from the fact that it makes it impossible to present that criticism which every worthwhile philosophical historiography demands. If each person remains so utterly enclosed within his own situation that his thought is nothing

more than the conceptualization of his most particular way of viewing reality, it is perfectly useless either to evaluate or criticize a philosophical system and treat as a concept what is but a manifestation of life. Criticism loses meaning if its sole aim is to bring to light the exact correlation between a "theory" and a destiny, an historical situation, a vital need: nothing more need be done than to try to "understand" and restrict analysis to description. An historiography based on these terms does point up the necessity of individuating exactly the personal problem of a philosopher so that the solution his philosophy proposes may be understood on its own merits and for its own sake. In this way historiography illuminates magnificently the historical, environmental and cultural context within which philosophers speculate. But to imprison the philosopher within the vision imposed upon him by his own situation is to misunderstand the nature of that peculiar relationship that obtains between the "personal" problem and the "philosophical" solution; it involves, too, a movement on the level of human understanding and a psychological historiography which, though respectful of the autonomy of every philosophy, is nevertheless deficient in the specifically speculative phases of philosophy. It is true that a great many thoughts of everyone are historical products, and that the heart of every problem is at once human and personal. Yet the strength of a vigorous speculative thought poses its own problems freely, and demands an understanding which should rise from an ineradicably human beginning to that universal problem that makes thought specifically philosophical, and expressible in terms of a speculative evaluation and criticism. Were philosophies but personal confessions and historical products, what genuine philosophical interest could there possibly be in re-calling and studying them? Philosophical historiography would either be reduced to an epicurean existence of a highly refined curiosity or restricted to pedagogical or edifying ends.

To reduce the multiplicity of philosophies to their exceptional or historical character is to compromise not only the unity of philosophy, but that very diversity that has been emphasized with such force. We are no longer dealing, strictly speaking, with various philosophies but with singular existents, historical situations, temporal circumstances in which philosophic expression is purely accidental. Nor does this philosophical expression constitute that intimate substance, which is centered instead either in action, life or history. In this way the unity of philosophy re-enters surreptitiously, and under false appearances. For if everyone possesses the philosophy he does indeed own in virtue of the very necessity by which he possesses, or rather *is*, his own situation, a metaphysic of necessity is unconsciously presupposed as the one philosophy, and appears in the form of that historical fatalism according to which everyone thinks as he does precisely because he is what he is. Hence, to hold that philosophies are exceptional and historical in character—i.e. fatal in their multiplicity—involves a dogmatic and insufficiently critical attitude.

*The Unity and Multiplicity of Philosophy*

**A**RE THE UNITY of philosophy and the multiplicity of philosophies, then, in such utter contrast that they are mutually exclusive? Does the stated

singularity of each philosophy compromise its universality? And does the proclaimed speculative value involve a negation of personality? Should any one of the terms be sacrificed to any other it would lead to such unfortunate results that it would be useful to investigate the possibility of their coexistence. But how can the unity of philosophy be conceived so that at one and the same time it may be reconciled with the multiplicity of philosophies and yet explain and justify it? And how can this multiplicity be conceived so that, rather than exclude unity, it will, on the contrary, demand it?

The best way of solving this problem, it seems to me, is by investigating the very act through which each one of us philosophizes. One will then see already present in this act, either implicitly or explicitly, unconsciously or consciously, an acknowledgment at once of the multiplicity of philosophies and of the unity of philosophy, and will then learn that the two terms, far from being incompatible, are indeed correlative, mutually essential.

On the one hand, when I begin to philosophize, it is indeed I who dedicate myself *personally* to this undertaking which I do according to *my* idea of philosophy, to that idea which I have freely thought out on the basis of my speculative demands. In executing such an idea, I work out *my own* philosophy and seek to solve *my own* problems, i.e. the problems which I have freely presented to myself and which I have taken out of my singular situation. In this way I encounter and resolve the problem that I am to myself, which indeed I have been able to make of myself. The solution I give is one with *my* way of seeing, a way which I have been developing slowly in response to my situation in my most distinctive and determinate way. The idea of philosophy, the philosophy constructed, the problem or problems, and the way of seeing them, are mine. The whole affair is indeed a personal matter for me as for the others, so that, by the very act of philosophizing, I not only admit but indeed demand that every one who philosophizes face *his own* problems and resolve them according to *his* way of seeing, and thus construct a philosophy on the basis of *his own* ideas.

On the other hand, when I undertake to philosophize, I am moved by a necessity *common* to every thinking being, the need for truth. It is not to my philosophy that I am dedicated: it is *philosophy itself* that I serve, even if, in such service, I develop a philosophy of my own. Moreover, in facing my own problems I not only face the problem that I am to myself, but the problems that every person is to himself, i.e. the problem that *man* is to himself. This problem, though *one and the same* for all men, is presented to me as the problem that I am to myself. The solution I give is certainly in harmony with the way in which I look at things, but I attempt this way of looking at things on the basis of reason. In my thinking I am committed to respect—and to see to it that others respect—the laws of *universal* reason to which I personally conform without claiming a monopoly, ready as I am to accept their demands no matter where they originate. The existence of truth is common to every one who philosophizes, the problem faced, even in its most singular configuration, is one and the same, and the reason whose demands are accepted and which is exercised in a personal way is universal. What is at issue here is philosophy itself which, taken in its very unity, runs through the single philosophies in which it finds embodiment.

The personality of philosophy means, at one and the same time, multiplicity of philosophies and unity of philosophy. In undertaking to philosophize I know at the outset that *my* philosophy will be arrayed *along with* other philosophies and that all of them taken together will make up philosophy. It is not *philosophy in itself* that is mine, but the peculiar way in which I understand philosophy and actually philosophize. A man who philosophizes in his own way nevertheless philosophizes; indeed, there is but one way of philosophizing and that is to do one's own. This thesis is valid, however, provided we add immediately and with equal force that to philosophize in one's own way indeed does involve the elaboration of a philosophy so that, strictly speaking, there is neither *just one* philosophy nor *many* philosophies. It is 'philosophy' alone that exists, and in the concrete philosophy always means, at one and the same time, *one* "philosophy" and "*philosophy in itself*."

It is the personality of philosophy which, if rightly understood, presents a point of equilibrium between the multiplicity of philosophies and the unity of philosophy. It forbids the sacrifice of either one of the terms to the other, and demonstrates instead their obvious compatibility. And that the two terms are indeed mutually essential will appear from a further deepening of the personalist principle, by showing how to conceive, respectively, both the multiplicity and the unity of philosophy.

#### *The Personal Character of Philosophy*

**T**O UNDERSTAND THE DIVERSE philosophies in a personal way they must be seen as expressions of the person, understood as free and conditioned rather than as imprisoned and limited. If it be said that I am one with my situation, it must be added that I am also, in an immediate way, a point of view, in virtue of which I can do nothing but see. In the very intimacy of my self I *am* the answer to the problems that are given and pressed upon me. I have nothing else to do than express and develop the answer in the form of a philosophy which is but a translation in conceptual and systematic terms of that outlook I originally am. I am imprisoned by my situation, by my problem and answer, and cannot but have the philosophy I have. Yet I am not one with my situation. I rather *appropriate* it freely, condition it by my reaction and incorporate it in the answer I give. Hence I cannot be said to be one with my point of view, for this point of view I *choose* freely. Moreover I transform my unique spiritual situation into such a condition that I am able to *look* freely and see only after I have looked. It is I who am moved by free initiative and, guided by reason, convert the situation in which I live into a problem, extract from it ever new problems, propose a critical, pondered solution, and systematize this complexus of problems and solutions into a finished philosophy. Though it is quite true that every philosopher begins afresh, he does not start completely from scratch, for he already has, from the very beginning and by necessity, a given outlook, with problems and solutions of his own. Yet he does begin to question everything anew and to give original answers in terms of his chosen point of view. In this way the character of his philosophy depends on the initiative with which he freely assumes his situation and directs that thought and reason which he represents and exercises in a personal way.

Thus every philosophy is always, so to speak, *lateral* (literally, *sided*) because the philosopher, as the conscious center of that personal experience within which his point of view is presented in varied ways, does not have a total and definitive knowledge. He speculates, rather, within a restricted, finite point of view and sees, as it were, from a tangent. But this does not mean that every philosophy is *uni-lateral* (*one-sided*), i.e. open to integration in a systematic whole, as if it snatched only one part of truth, and then demanded fulfilment in the other partial visions in the system of total knowledge. From its one-sided perspective every philosophy is faced with the one problem common to all philosophies. And it is just this that bestows upon philosophy its irreducible, original and exemplary character.

A further consequence may be noted. Every philosophy is always *unrepeatable*; for it is an answer to problems situated in the most individual conditions and based upon such unique responses that, strictly speaking, it is best to refer to the multiplicity rather than the singularity of philosophies. But this does not mean that philosophy is *exceptional*, i.e. enclosed within the incommunicable and incomprehensible substance of the person who has worked it out. The solution given to a singularly determinate problem will be singularly determinate. Yet it will be given in terms of reason, for in giving it the philosopher has followed the laws of thought to which he has committed himself the moment he has decided to think at all. It is here that we find that somewhat adventurous note that inheres in philosophical inquiry, for the philosopher, though committed to universal reason as the criterion of his personal judgments, does not yet know where he will end. And so it is that every philosophy possesses a speculative value which is universally recognizable, as soon as we take pains to understand the precise terms of the problem it proposes to solve.

Every philosophy is, then, so universally *conditioned* by an *historical context* that it always constitutes an answer to historical problems; moreover, it is impossible to evaluate its truth without individuating the precise problem it seeks to solve. Whoever attempts to separate the truth of a philosophy from its historical context will find himself empty-handed. Every solution must be related to a precise statement of the question, otherwise it will become lost in a mere verbal exercise, for the very language of a philosophy is generated from a source that illuminates its meaning. If the language is taken by itself, without reference to the burning problems from which it has painfully arisen, we are permitting the secret of a philosophy to entrench itself behind the silence of signs which then become meaningless. But to say that every historical condition is unsurmountable, and that it is impossible to separate the truth of a philosophy from its historical context, does not mean that every philosophy is, without any further qualification, *historical*, in the sense of a mere historical product or as restricted, in validity, to the period within which it has arisen. Indeed, the historical problems philosophy undertakes to solve cannot be fixed in their terms *a priori*, as if all the philosopher has to do is to accept and submit himself to them as if they were inevitable and imposed upon him, like a pace he must fit into if he wishes to escape the risk of being out of step. It is not history that imposes the problem; it is the philosopher who

either disengages it from history or forces history to propose it to him. Moreover the validity of a philosophy is not restricted to the period in which it arises because, the very moment it *resolves* historical problems, it escapes them, and offers its own validity to those who are able to find the solution by matching it up with the relevant problem.

Finally the necessity of *relativizing* the solution to the problem in order to grasp the truth of a philosophy has nothing to do with *relativism*. Philosophies cannot be grouped and reduced to a common plane, and then viewed as equally true just because they express the one situation from which they all arise. They cannot be understood, that is, as a kind of contemplation which is restricted to recording, describing and reconstructing, without either judging or criticizing what has been recorded. On the contrary, precisely because every philosophy is the product of a free initiative in which the philosopher has posed problems and thought out solutions by the personal exercise of that universal reason whose answer he is committed to respect, every philosopher demands not only to be understood but judged, if need be, contradicted. By the very act of philosophizing he has agreed to submit himself to the judgment of reason, and just as in the name of reason he may criticize and contradict himself, so in turn he demands to be contradicted and judged by whoever is competent to do so in the name of reason. Indeed, in the very act of philosophizing, far from appearing with all the others as on a stage, he has already engaged in a discussion with whoever wishes to accept his invitation.

#### *The Universality of Philosophy*

**T**O UNDERSTAND THE UNITY of philosophy in a personal way then, is to abandon the conception of a unique and definitive philosophy that might be taken for knowledge of the whole truth. A philosophy which knew the whole truth would no longer be philosophy: it would be *sophia* without further qualification. No longer would it be that *human sophia* which is proper to the finite: it would be a higher-than-human knowledge, and would both transcend the condition of man and stop all inquiry. Actually the whole truth does not offer itself to man in the form of a possession achieved and definitively conquered. It is rather present as exigency and norm; as exigency exciting man to search for *the* truth, as norm acting as judge of *the* truths such inquiry attains. Precisely because truth is unique so is philosophy; and precisely because unique, it is rather a search for than a total knowledge of truth. Moreover, just as there are many individual truths that can be reached through inquiry, there are many different philosophies, none of which succeeds in knowing truth exclusively, precisely because they are all stimulated by one exigency that binds them in a common work. Since it is in *philosophy itself* that the single philosophies converge, it cannot be identified with any one in particular, present as it is in each and every one. It is the need for truth that motivates every thinking mind which has become conscious and reflective; it is this which is norm, guide, criterion and law for the philosopher who assumes the responsibility of acting in conformity with reason. Though in themselves universal, reason and thought are exercised by man in a personal way. Yet the personal element in philosophy cannot be reduced to psychological intimacy or arbitrary

subjectivity, for a personal exercise or reason does not conflict with a vivid proclamation of its *universality*, with an acceptance of its function as norm and criterion of every judgment personally pronounced. The same holds for philosophy. For everyone speaks in the name of philosophical thought and admits, indeed demands, that everybody else do the same. In the way I myself commit a common work to the demands of reason, and insist that the others do the same. If someone should demonstrate to me, on rational grounds, that I am wrong, I will withdraw as readily as I would speak in the name of reason were I to discover someone in error and demonstrate to him the precise source of his error. And let it be noted that I do not permit myself to be convinced by the other as that particular person, but as one who excites me to listen to the voice of that reason I was unable to hear, and which now we both exercise in a deeply personal way, he in convincing me of my error and I in permitting myself to be convinced.

From what we have said it does not at all follow that, in philosophizing, I must oppose my truth to the errors of others or simply place it alongside other truths. On the contrary, we are all engaged in the same search for truth and committed to a common task. Each person throws open for discussion whatever reason has shown him, and in turn does not refuse to discuss whatever reason might have dictated to others. The many philosophies are not arrayed for the sake of offering a pleasant spectacle, nor are they engaged in out-shouting and silencing one another. Conscious of a work that can be performed only in the first person, they rather cooperate through discussion, and even when one is contrasted with another, they work together, one with another, for the discovery of truth. This is *the* true philosophy which embraces and binds all philosophies into a common and uninterrupted dialogue: this alone deserves the name of philosophical unity. And so it is that this common discussion, no matter how presented (either as indigenous to every philosophy whilst conducting a dialogue with others or as a new dialogue) is the *one* philosophy that runs through and binds every one in an unbroken yet not total scheme: a dialogue rather than a dialectic; it is free yet forever open. This philosophy is a dialogue rather than a dispersal, a communion rather than a monologue, an itinerary rather than a history of errors, a collaboration rather than a battle, a co-presence of voices freely talking, questioning and answering one another rather than a determined genealogy in which everybody is assigned an immutable place. It is a perennial meeting of voices forever alive and worthy of being heard rather than a brutal, forced choice for life. It is this rich and animated dialogue that constitutes the unity of philosophy.

In this dialogue the autonomy of each philosophy is not destroyed; it is, on the contrary, respected. Were the case otherwise, there would indeed be no dialogue. Every philosophy, in its individual yet open, unrepeatable character, is absolute and definitive: *absolute*, however, not in the sense of possessing the whole truth or in being enclosed within its own incommunicable confines; but as a free choice irreducible to any of the other philosophies. Though connected with preceding philosophies, it begins anew, opens up new roads and need not be necessarily submerged with other philosophies through forced conclusions. Each philosophy exhibits a development all its own, so original and

autonomous that were I to interrogate it properly it would answer me with an unmistakable voice and, were I to introduce extraneous questions and problems, I would see it react as a living organism. It is not *definitive* in being the one true philosophy or conception of the world which its author could not but have; it is rather definitive in the sense that it has erected a *ktēma eis aei*. As soon as its own problems have been resolved they are transcended, and this philosophy becomes universally valid with a validity sanctioned by the very exercise of that reason which has evolved the true philosophy. It is open for everyone to acknowledge, indeed it demands such acknowledgment, even though this take place through disagreement and discussion. In every case it is worthy of consideration and endowed with a perennial character that excites infinite interpretations, not only in virtue of ever-new points of view, but also by virtue of the infinity of its own aspects.

It is this conception of the various philosophies understood as free options, each one absolute and irreducible, recognizable by everyone, endowed with an autonomous development and constantly open to interpretations which, it seems to me, makes philosophical historiography possible and confers upon it a genuine *speculative* mark. With such foundations, philosophical historiography becomes truly philosophical, not by silencing all the preceding philosophies in favor of the one true philosophy, but through its office as *confilosofia* by which all philosophies discourse with equal urgency. Every voice must be respected in its unique physiognomy and no consensus or false "authority" can be imposed. One must interrogate, and not just by talking; one must listen too, and not only know how to listen. One must learn how to elicit a response; by interrogating a living voice questions are presented in such a way that the answers given are at once genuine and correct. And thus it is that we are urged to use and even to attempt to engender that congeniality which alone makes it possible to ask questions in such a way that the answers are most revealing and not at all falsified by arbitrary super-structures. This kind of philosophy is straight-forward, and the more so the moment we realize that this engagement in a dialogue with other philosophies nourishes that discussion with myself that constitutes my philosophy. On the one hand, it offers interlocutors with whom I discourse and who assist me in strengthening and rectifying my own philosophy, guiding me in the ways for which I myself was searching, and revealing aspects I had not yet suspected or discerned; on the other hand, it prompts me to evaluate, judge and criticize the answers given, on the basis of that very reason to which they, in philosophizing, submit them.

#### *Philosophy: Infinite and Free*

**U**NITY OF PHILOSOPHY and multiplicity of philosophies are thus reconciled and imply one another for the unity of philosophy is but a *philosophizing-with* (*confilosofia*) of single philosophies. The openness of every philosophy to all the others, the communication which, through discussion, binds them all into a common sphere of reciprocal comprehension, the collaboration into whose vast circle everyone is thrown and in which everyone assumes a particular responsibility, this unity never hardens into a totality. On the contrary, it opens itself to an understanding of ever new and unforeseeable ways

of philosophizing, and rests on no other foundation than the free and inexhaustible infinite, which can be neither broken up into necessary moments nor divided into subsumable parts, nor determined with particular ways, nor revealed to a privileged knowledge. This open way of philosophizing arouses infinite voices to attempt, each in its own way, to capture and reveal that openness, and stimulates them by respecting their autonomy and freedom, recognizing their value so that each is free and autonomous within the precision of its determination, open and infinite in its own definiteness. The ambiguous expression "unity of philosophy and multiplicity of philosophies" is thus converted into the much richer and more pregnant formula: "truth is inexhaustibly infinite and he who, motivated by its exigencies, undertakes a search for it, is pre-eminently free."

*Translated by ALFRED DI LASCIA*

## AN INTEREST IN POLITICS

Meaning, rather than reportage, is the focus of *The Commonweal*. This magazine deals with the ideas involved in political matters. The people who received *Commonweal* Christmas Gift Subscriptions last year read such political articles as these: Hannah Arendt's "The Ex-Communists," George N. Shuster's "Academic Freedom," Bishop John J. Wright's "After the Brave New World," Jerome G. Kerwin's "Fear and Freedom," Peter F. Drucker's "The Meaning of Mass Production," Evelyn Waugh's "The Voice of Tito," and Michael Harrington's "Silence on the Left."

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# PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION

CLEMENT H. DE HAAS

**T**HE RELATIONS of religion to psychology are of two kinds, negative and positive. The negative relation is exemplified by the popular belief that psychology explains religion, that is, explains it away; or by the almost childish delight of many psychologists in debunking traditional beliefs. This delight itself may be no more than a manifestation of the psychologist's own Oedipus complex: he still fights his personal father in the guise of the great father-image "God." Then there are the theologians who adopt a tone of apologetic defiance or superior benevolence as soon as they hear the word psychology. On the other side, there is a positive relationship. To an open-minded student of religion, analytical psychology has brought a wealth of new insights, and a psychologist in the exercise of his profession almost ends up as a student of religion, because he discovers that he cannot deal with the soul without dealing, at the same time, with religion. The latter situation is my main concern here. "Any method," says Vestdijk, "which aims at the totality of the psyche is essentially religious." A psycho-therapist's business is in a real sense the cure of souls. His aim is to help his patient to self-realization on the highest possible level. His work has therefore unmistakably religious characteristics and associations. Moreover, the modern comparative study of religion has discovered a certain order in the bewildering variety of religious rites and symbols: basic symbols, especially. We might call these basic symbols the vocabulary of religion, and their combination in various patterns and structures the syntax of religion. The student of these phenomena suspends his judgment on metaphysical questions: they are not his business. He studies and describes religious phenomena simply as they appear. And of these basic symbols there is only a limited number. This is probably because they correspond to the limited number of basic and typical human situations. Thus, for example, in religions where deity is experienced as a personal entity, the relationship is limited to certain possible forms: father-child, king-subject, lover-beloved, master-slave, friend-friend, and so on. The analytical psychologist works on similar lines with phenomena. For him the realities of the soul are phenomena; they are empirical facts. They reveal characteristic patterns. Thus it is not academic interest that brings the analytical psychologist to religion, but therapeutic necessity. He is not talking about "psychology of religion." He finds certain psychic manifestations, e.g. dreams, which have a distinctly religious character. Their images and symbols, as well as their form, are religious. They are often mysterious and overwhelming; they are what Rudolf Otto called numinous.

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These experiences, charged with numinous significance, have a symbolism or language which the patient is unable to understand. At times, the doctor

himself cannot understand them. Human and animal figures, colors, numerical and geometrical patterns, whole stories or incidents are produced in dreams such as have an exact analogy with the kind of figures, patterns and incidents that are studied by ethnology and comparative religion. One of Jung's patients described a phantasy which was almost identical with an account given in an ancient Mithras-liturgy, the text of which was published only some years later. A merchant suffering from a neurosis produced a drawing which represented in all essentials the god Kari of the Orang Semang on Malacca, of whom he knew absolutely nothing. Some of these spontaneous fantasies no doubt are attributable to cryptomnesia; but many are not.

Apparently, things go on in the soul which it cannot or does not express in words, but in myths and images remarkably like those of known religions. Perhaps myth is just a special sort of language; a language which expresses in its own way realities that apparently cannot be expressed otherwise. The incidence of identical or similar symbols at so many different places and times and among different groups seems to suggest the existence of certain general patterns of psychic behaviour, e.g. a river bed may be dry. But if it is filled with water the water will follow the course of the river bed. An eye may be blind or blindfolded, or in a dark room. But when it sees, it will see colors because it is an eye, that is, an instrument sensitive in a special way to certain wavelengths. The soul seems to have similar moulds of experience, certain "matrices" or forms of action. These moulds of experience or river beds of the soul are what Jung calls archetypes. Analytical psychologists work on this hypothesis. As against the Freudian psycho-analysts, they believe that these archetypes do not consist of individual material, belonging to this or that particular ego. Not all symbols are introjections of experiences and fantasies of childhood or otherwise repressed and distorted personal material. Jung thinks that archetypes are part of the psychic organization of the human species, much as the secretion of bile is part of our physiological organization.

It may well be that the archetypes belong to the system of instincts of which they would be, so to speak, the psychoid side. There is thus nothing particularly mysterious about archetypes—at least, nothing more mysterious than about any of the other manifestations of life. They are innate, unconscious dispositions to react in a certain way or to produce certain representations whenever a specific psychic situation obtains. For example, there comes a moment in the lives of many people when they awaken to a full and acute awareness of the evil in themselves, the very evil that is usually so carefully repressed or so comfortably projected on some convenient scapegoat: the Jews, the capitalists, the communists or Rudolf. At this juncture an inferior or wicked, possibly dark or black figure usually makes its appearance in dreams. Jung has called this archetypal figure the "shadow"; it represents a man's own dark side. We meet the shadow not only in dreams; we find him in myths and tales of hostile brothers, twins, doubles or "opposite numbers," such as Baldur-Loki, Osiris-Set, Baal-mut, Cain-Abel, Christ-Antichrist, Siegfried-Hagen, Faust-Mephisto Jekyll-Hyde, and many more. To account for the general diffusion of such motifs, Jung does not resort to the questionable theory of the "Wandermärchen." He rather assumes a psychic region to which these general, archetypal images belong. This region he calls the "collective unconscious" because it is general or even uni-

versal. It is not confined to individual persons or even individual races or civilizations.

Instead of collective unconscious, the term "autonomous psyche" has been suggested. This term brings out another important fact: that parts of the human psyche which are not contained in the conscious ego have a habit of going their own way and pursuing their own ends, whether we like them or not. Complexes seem to enjoy a kind of autonomy. In former days people therefore used to speak of being possessed by demons. Nowadays we speak of compulsory neuroses, but it is more or less the same thing; it is a symptom of a lack of integration of personality against which the soul protests with neurotic symptoms. After all, we all take it for granted that the body, with its own entelechy, protests with pain and pathological symptoms against injustice done to it by unsuitable food and the like. The psyche is presumably no less mysterious than the body. In the same way as doctors do with respect to the body, analytical psychologists assume an innate regulative tendency of the psyche, striving to secure a maximum of development.

But the process of psychic developments and self-realization has its spiritual, in fact, religious, aspects. This becomes evident when in the course of analysis the psyche produces all kinds of numinous images and archetypes out of the depths of the unconscious. In fact, this also explains the pseudo-mystical and pseudo-religious atmosphere surrounding so much of analytical psychology at its worst. But it does seem as if the collective unconscious, by producing the archetype, mediates religious experience. Professor Jung summed up his life's experience in the following words:

During the past thirty years people from all the civilized countries of the earth have consulted me... Among all my patients in the second half of life—that is to say over thirty-five—there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has really been healed who did not regain his religious outlook

The proviso "in the second half of life" should be noted. Experience seems to indicate that in the first half of life the energies of the psyche are directed towards adaption to and establishment in the outer world. As soon as this is achieved, the energies change their course: man is required to find his "inner" world.

**P**SYCHOLOGISTS, CONSEQUENTLY, often tend to believe that religions arose as the objectivation and projection of collective archetypal events. It is not for the psychologists to decide whether they are more than that in a metaphysical sense, whether primordial images and ideas correspond to an objective reality "outside," whether e.g. the archetypal Trinity experienced by the psyche answers to an objective Trinity affirmed in Christian dogma. But that the archetypes are real and active as images and ideas there can be no doubt at all. Science cannot grasp God. I do not think it even wants to. But it can and does discover and examine the human idea of God—including the archetypal.

type or concept of "revelation." Of course, it would be just as foolish and unscientific to conclude that there is no God from the fact that there is very certainly an idea of God, as it would be to suppose that the eye can see nothing but its own process of seeing. Archetypal experience has, as a rule, a distinctly transcendental quality. That is why Jung carefully distinguishes between "Ich-erfahrung" and "Innen-erfahrung," that is to say, if we experience something within ourselves it does not follow that we experience ourselves. But however that may be, it is certainly not the psychologist's business to smuggle the ontological proof into his science.

Experience seems to suggest that one of the most potent archetypes is that which symbolises completeness and self-realization. Usually this symbol is an arrangement based on the number four: four colors, four people, a square, a circle, or different combinations of these. Integration seems to mean the whole man—body and soul, conscious and unconscious, light and darkness, good and evil. Man seems to realize his self only if he also realizes that he is 'man,' neither beast nor angel. Unlike the beast his hands can reach towards heaven; unlike the angels, both his feet must walk the earth, for if he attempts to fly he falls like Icarus. The psychologist would say that the inflation of unconsciousness leads to possession by the unconscious. We repress too much (and too successfully) our 'lower' instincts. This has been brought home to us by psycho-analysis.

We can also repress the equally imperious and much more exacting demands of our 'higher' instincts. Analytical psychology insists on that. We can repress the spirit, like Adam hiding behind a tree or Jonah fleeing before God. To achieve true humanity neither should be repressed, and it is perhaps this insight that is also meant by the symbol of the resurrection of the body, as distinct from faith in the immortality and survival of the soul. The psychologist's neurosis and the theologian's state of sin—wide as the difference between them is—both imply maladjustment to a kind of reality. Psychological analysis and regeneration both mean the relinquishing of an inadequate ego-position and the finding of a new centre of one's personality. The difference is, of course, that the theologian talks of objective, valid, though transcendental facts, whereas the psychologist, more modestly, will never presume to talk about anything but empirical psychic states. The urge towards integration is strikingly illustrated by a dream in which the dreamer found herself in a circular room, which might be taken to represent her potential selfhood. The room was divided in two by a wall. She felt that she *had* to get into the other half of the room, but as there was no door in the wall she had to descend a staircase and mount again on the other side. The sense of psychic dissociation and incompleteness, the need for integration to be achieved only by a 'descent' into the depths of the unconscious is expressed most clearly. One is at once reminded of all the stories of descents into the underworld to find the 'treasure' (which may mean the self); of Faust's descent to the 'mothers'; of the cabalistic doctrine of the 'descent for the sake of ascent,' of Baptism and, in fact, of all rites symbolising death and submergence followed by rebirth. If, therefore, analytical psychology has anything to say concerning the good or ill of our civilization, it is that, whether religious imagery is true or not in terms of metaphysical or historical propositions, it is socially and psychologic-

ally true and necessary as the means of reconciling the conscious and the unconscious.

This does not, of course, mean that I am pleading, on purely psychological grounds, for or against any religion in particular. But the psychologist can point to the archetypal dispositions that might account for psychic processes being 'projected' into the outside worlds and then regarded as historical events. Obviously no psychologist can pretend to know whether Jesus actually rose from the dead or whether Moses received ten commandments written with the finger of God. This is the historian's business. Similarly, without ever indulging in theology or metaphysics, the psychologist may point out to the philosopher the archetypal basis of philosophical concepts. But most psychologists would, I suppose, agree that the symbolism of the known religions represents expressions and projections of basic psychic functions. To discard the symbols completely and indiscriminately, because we have outgrown them in certain important respects, would be throwing away the baby with the bath-water. The problem is particularly acute for western civilization.

The occidental psyche, as contrasted with the eastern, has been turned towards its conscious function. We have reaped the blessing and the curse of this one-sided orientation: a highly developed science and technology on the one hand, and, on the other, a disastrous neglect of the realities of the soul and a complete lack of healthy come-and-go between our conscious ratio and our unconscious life-roots. The situation was succinctly described once by a lunatic who confided to Professor Jung: "Doctor, last night I disinfected the whole heaven with carbolic, but there was no God to be found!" By disregarding the profounder and often terrible realities of the psyche we do not build a world of luminous human wisdom but the exact reverse. Instead of emancipating the human being we let out the beast, because the purely rational man becomes the helpless prey of the irrational, destructive, and even daemonic forces in his unconscious. To borrow a picture from the Apocalypse: if you believe that you have securely locked up the beast in the depth of the abyss, it is sure to get loose again one day, perhaps after 1,000 years, and to ravage the earth. The form this problem can take with modern man is illustrated by a dream, one of a long series, reported by a patient in analysis. The dreamer was a typical modern intellectual atheist. His earlier dreams had revealed a radical and incisive, though unconscious, criticism of the rationalist position. Then came the following dream:

I was in a hut in Alaska, there was a knock at the door and in came Santa Claus. He was very exhausted and said: 'So much snow and I cannot find a single crystal!' I pitied the old man and went out with him to help him in his search. We were both searching very hard, lying on our knees each with a magnifying glass in his hand. But we found only little, amorphous lumps clotted together, and no single crystal. The old man said sadly: 'The strength of the middle is missing' and I answered: 'Yes, the tabernacle is empty!'

The old man, Santa Claus, represents what Jung has called the archetype of meaning. Considering the infinite variety of human individuals of whom the Rabbis of the Talmud said that all are God's image and yet all are dif-

ferent, one understands what it means that no one crystal is to be found, that is, no single 'structured' snowflake. It is a picture of present-day humanity. Amorphous, structureless individuals, clotted together in amorphous groups and masses because there is no real significant centre. 'The strength of the middle,' that which by its mere presence would give form and meaning and structure to the whole, and turn it from a dull lump into a bright crystal, is sadly missing. The tabernacle, the shrine, is empty.

This dream is, I think, a typical symptom of a very wide-spread uneasiness. It tells us a psychological—and, I would insist again, not necessarily a theological—truth: the truth that only by a re-awakening of a sense of the holy and by a return to the realities of our unconscious psyche is it possible to integrate again the human personality and, *pro tanto*, human society.

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# NOTES on other Publications

## THE POLITICAL-CULTURAL SCENE

### 1.

*World Power in the Balance* (Noontday Press). This new book by Tibor Mende is an excellent analysis of the shifts in political power which have made the so-called "under-developed nations"—in Asia, Africa, and South America—so important in any enlightened policy for the future. Mende makes clear the political and economic reasons why, with the deterioration of European power, a vacuum has been left in many areas, a situation which Communism has brilliantly exploited. Europe represents a militarily strategic position, but one of increasing economic difficulty if its pattern continues to assume the necessity of importing raw materials from "backward" nations, which it can feed into its own industry for profitable re-export. Mende asks for genuine courage in appraising the situation, and the willingness to understand that the next half-century may produce the rule of the under-developed nations. These nations are understandably suspicious of the West, and it is unfortunate that the choice between the West and Communism is usually placed in such a way that the former emphasizes a total political commitment immediately, with the assumption that the necessary industrialization will take 50 years. Russia is in a position to make a promise of much speedier development, and the prevailing feeling in the under-developed countries is that much of the West's talk of political freedom is meaningless; economic status must come before there can be political maturation. Mende's concluding chapters make clear that the West's conception of Utopia has always been one which assumed western political and economic advantage. He advocates a bold and far-sighted program to raise standards in these nations, without necessarily tying them to any political commitments or hidden economic imperialism.

### 2.

*Cardinal Gibbons.* Father John Tracy Ellis' two-volume life of the late Cardinal Gibbons indicates an exhaustive study of the unpublished materials on the subject, and the book will probably remain definitive. Most readers will feel however, that not enough has been done to relate his material to the general developments in American history during the period he is describing. Father Ellis seems to accept the Cardinal's own opinion of the events in which he participated, and to gloss over some of the harsher reality of the controversies he describes. Despite a few instances of special pleading, and an unwillingness to face up to Gibbons' seeming lack of courage, this is required reading for all interested in the history of American Catholicism.

### 3.

*The World and the West* (Oxford). This is a thin and disappointing work from such a learned historian as Toynbee. It is a collection of popular and up-to-date lectures on East-West tensions, which indicate the author's lack of

confidence in the survival of Western civilization. Toynbee makes a special point of praising the attempt of the Jesuit missions in China and India which tried to preach a Christianity free of the externals peculiar to the West; he believes that for success in the East today we must adopt the same approach.

## 4.

*Culture and History.* Written with a concern for the restoration of an evangelical and biblical theology, Dr. Emile Cailliet's *The Christian Approach to Culture* (Abingdon-Cokesbury) tries to avoid the extremes both of secularism and the Barthian repudiation of the ideal of a Christian culture. He is especially concerned with problems of Christian philosophy and traces the origins of the divorce between religion and culture to the "ontological deviation" which has influenced the whole development of Western philosophy. He sees an affinity with the Hebrew approach to reality in early Greek thought, but with Plato and Aristotle the Greeks lost "not their mythological fancies but their genuine sense of religious relationship with reality."

Guided by his reading of St. Augustine's *City of God*, Roger L. Shinn discusses *Christianity and the Problem of History* (Scribner's). Augustine himself provides alternate possibilities: emphasis upon the ultimate eschatological fulfillment which gives meaning to an otherwise chaotic and incomplete history (eschatology in the apocalyptic sense); on the significance of the history of the divine society (the true church); and on the appreciation of history itself, including secular history and its dynamic possibilities of human achievement. Shinn's sympathies are with the first position, which he finds emphasized by Augustine, Luther and the majority of contemporary Protestant theologians: "history is not the solution of the human problem but part of the problem demanding solution." This position is seen as constantly demanding the assumption of the social responsibilities of a Christian dynamism. The ecclesiastical strand is identified with St. Thomas and medieval Christianity. Although Shinn pays tribute to the work of von Hügel, Maritain and Dawson, he finds an absence of an eschatological sense in "official" Catholicism, and perhaps has under-estimated the importance of the increasing Catholic emphasis on history.

## 5.

*Literature.* Herbert Weisinger's *Tragedy and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall* (Michigan State) discusses the relation between tragedy and the elemental notion of redemption through suffering. After explaining the concept of the "fortunate fall" in Christianity, the book goes on to discuss at great length myth and ritual associated with the idea of the divine king in the Ancient Near East and in the Mediterranean countries. Weisinger's conclusion: "tragedy represents the highest stage of the development of the form of the myth and ritual pattern," out of which the notion of the fortunate fall developed, for tragedy shows choice resulting in suffering and struggle, which in turn lead to new knowledge and heightened moral stature.

Erich Heller's *The Disinherited Mind: Essays in Modern German Literature and Thought* (Dufour Editions) is a provocative discussion of Burckhardt,

Nietzsche, Spengler, Kafka, Rilke, Goethe, and the relationship between poetry and belief. Heller insists on the humanistic vocation of the professor of literature, which he understands as requiring a judgment on *all* the values which may be present in literary works.

Stanley Romaine Hopper has edited *Spiritual Problems in Contemporary Literature* (Harper), an uneven book of 18 essays that are full of many large generalizations and rarely come to grips with a particular literary work. Certain assumptions run through the book: because there is an absence of a general tradition which readers would accept and understand, and because religion provides a unified world view, poetry is the handmaiden of religion, and poetry and religion are natural allies; contemporary literature is said to testify to a hunger for religion, and it is believed that Eliot, for example, is a better poet for being familiar with theology or for becoming a Christian. These well-intentioned over-simplifications, at a time when the cultural climate favors "religious" literature, are ultimately harmful both to literature and to religion.

#### 6.

*Psychology.* Pantheon Books, in collaboration with the Bollingen Foundation, has launched its edition of the collected works of C. G. Jung in English with *Psychology of Alchemy* (Vol. 12). Jung is concerned with alchemy in relation to philosophy and religion rather than as chemical pre-history. He sees it as an effort to resolve the conflicts of the conscious mind, to which it stands in the same relationship as the dream. The raw material for this study comes from hundreds of dreams and visual impressions and from the rich lore of alchemy, legend and religious fantasy of East and West. Despite its wealth of ideas and its promise of discovery of an unexplored continent of symbolic thought, the book also contains question-begging assumptions and unsubstantiated interpretations.

Scribner's has published *Ways to psychic health*, by the Swiss psychotherapist Alphonse Maeder. He has found that in certain types of cases brief psychotherapy may be used to good results, and presents fifteen case studies to illustrate his approach. Combining psychiatric skill with pastoral care, he has "concentrated on healing—on self-development and the regeneration and restitution of the soul."

#### 7.

*Acton.* Interest in Lord Acton continues to grow, as is evidenced by the recent publication of Gertrude Himmelfarb's *Lord Acton: a Study in Conscience* (Chicago), and G. E. Fasnacht's *Acton's Political Philosophy* (Viking). The former is an intellectual biography, which manages to place Acton in the framework of his times. From his early years as a practical conservative with a sense of mission to the English Catholic community, until the end of his life, when as a doctrinaire liberal his hopes had been dashed, Acton is constantly proposing great ideas; he is defeated first of all by "his own restless, dissatisfied, ambitious mind." Miss Himmelfarb, in her treatment of the Vatican Council and its consequences, relies almost solely on Acton's version; she feels that there was never any deep reconciliation between Acton and the Church.

Fasnacht's work is a good attempt at a systematic analysis of Acton's political ideas at maturity, under the headings: theory of conscience, the idea of development, the English and American political traditions, the state government and democracy, nationality and power. In a valuable introduction, Fasnacht discusses liberty as the central principle of Acton's thinking.

In the CAMBRIDGE JOURNAL of December 1952, Maurice Cowling has made a serious charge against Douglas Woodruff's introduction and editing of *Essays on Church and State*—which Viking has brought out in an American edition. Because some material has not been consulted, Acton's relations with Newman are presented as more peaceful than they were. There have been alterations in the text whose cumulative effect "is to remove from Acton's words much of their bite and sting, especially with regard to matters which relate to the historical definition of Roman Catholic doctrine."

## 8.

*Psychoanalysis and personality* (Sheed and Ward). This study by Father Joseph Nuttin probably represents the most mature evaluation of psychoanalysis by a Catholic in English to date. Father Nuttin reveals himself as completely familiar with his subject, both its clinical practice and its literature. His general attitude towards it is revealed in the preface: "As an isolated dogmatic system Freudism is out of date, but as a source of new ideas about man's psychic life it was never more active or more fruitful." The second part of the book attempts to build up a dynamic theory of human personality, relying especially on Adler, but avoiding philosophical commitments. A well-annotated bibliography is presented in an appendix. Not a popular work either in style or content, it deserves to be consulted by the serious student.

## 9.

*Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (Bollingen Series, Pantheon). Even Maritain's many enthusiastic regular readers will have some pleasant surprises in noting the range and concrete nature of his new book. Long known as an able defender of contemporary art, Maritain here gives a full-scale presentation of the positive meaning of modern "subjectivism," distinguishing between "the creative self" and "self-centered ego." He builds up his case both critically and historically, although he perhaps fails to give due emphasis to the relation of the economic-political situation to the alienation of the artist. Maritain's description of the process by which the interpenetration of subject and object becomes a work of art will reward both the theorist and the artist. The "preconscious" character of much of this process is rightly emphasized. Each section of the work contains a choice of texts at the end (from Plato to Dylan Thomas), and the discussion of them reveals a genuine poetic intelligence.

## 10.

*Catholic journalism.* The need for regular presentation of objective information in the world of religion has been well served by the founding of the bi-weekly *L'ACTUALITÉ RELIGIEUSE DANS LE MONDE*, which is under the spon-

sorship of the Dominicans of Latour-Maubourg. Using the techniques of modern journalism, but editing the articles with a sobriety and a discretion equalled only in the best secular newspapers, *L'ACTUALITÉ* draws on the work of special correspondents, as well as the Catholic and secular press throughout the world. Concentrating a major part of each issue on presenting a concise documentation of some subject of general interest, it also gives able summaries of papal addresses, various national and international conferences, recent books, etc. It is unfortunate that nothing comparable has as yet been attempted in the United States. One cannot help but speculate as to whether such a new organ as *JUBILEE*, which is making a particularly interesting effort to adopt modern techniques to popular religious journalism, could introduce some of this kind of service in their own monthly issues.

## 11.

The June number of *LE SEMEUR*, monthly organ of the French Protestant student movement, was given to "the future of Asia." The spiritual uprootedness of Asian intellectuals is emphasized. On the whole Christianity is still a western import, related to western imperialism. Martha Zachariah discusses the attraction of Communism, and the importance of the development of India toward greater social justice within a stable framework. Marxist Communism is not inevitable in Asia, if the democratic social forces become dynamic enough. A Christian should be filled with hope, in any case, since his security is not rooted in historic necessity, but in the feeling that he is a member of the divine community. Keith Bridston calls attention to the role played by native Christians in the fight for Indonesian independence; missionaries come only at the invitation and under the direction of Indonesian churches.

## 12.

*European integration.* This is the major theme of the most recent number (No. 3) of the newly-established *TRIBUNE DES PEUPLES*, a review encouraging high-level political discussions among European independents—from English "Bevanists" to Christian trade union representatives. In this issue on Europe, Paul Vignaux makes a vigorous presentation of his position that the idea of a common European market is an illusion; in practice, it will mean a step backward towards a neo-liberalism which would only aggravate contradictions and disparities. A democratic type of economic planning is now conceivable only on the national level. A European political community today would add to the dangers of the Atlantic pact. Rather than supra-national fusion, Vignaux envisages inter-government cooperation, capable of associating both England and the Scandinavian countries in a European organization. Vignaux seems to leave aside the Franco-German problem, but his position needs to be better known.

## 13.

*"On the duality and growth of physical science."* This article by Gerald Holton (*AMERICAN SCIENTIST*, January 1953) succeeds in showing that science is not the monolithic enterprise it is often thought to be. There is discussion of the nature of discovery and of concepts, the range of motivation of scientists,

and of the growth of science. Unclear as well as clear ideas often play constructive roles in scientific development. A distinction is introduced between private science (the habits of thought and work, ideas, etc., of the individual) and public science (formalized results in books, journals, etc.).

## 14.

*Modern Science and Modern Man* (Doubleday). These 1952 Bampton lectures treat: 1.—the changes in science, and the changes in society that science has caused in the last fifteen years; 2.—the changes in the world picture provided by science due to changes in the latter's foundation in the last 50 years (caused mainly by the theory of relativity, and quantum theory); 3.—the relation of science to intellectual and moral values; 4.—the relation of science to spiritual values. The last chapter collects what the author calls the minimum spiritual position to which human thought must be committed; central here is the conviction that the universe is not totally explicable in human terms.

## 15.

*Other notes from Science periodicals.* Max Born's "The conceptual situation in physics" (PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY, Part A, June 1953) is an interesting but fairly technical discussion of the foundations of theoretical physics. The recent rise of interest in these questions has been partly caused by developments in theoretical physics... P. E. Hodgson's "The ethics of atomic warfare" (ATOMIC SCIENTIST NEWS — British) approaches the subject from the traditional Christian view. The conclusion is that atomic weapons do not change the fundamental concepts regarding the morality of warfare, but they may now be harder to apply. The discussion is in terms of ends and means, combatants, the double effect, etc... E. Colin Cherry's "The Communication of Information" (THE AMERICAN SCIENTIST, Oct. 1952) is a discussion of the historical origins of theories of communication and of the relations of some common interpretations of communication. Without using mathematics, the author discusses such notions as probability, real and "artificial" brains, cybernetics, etc... Ian Freed's "Dualism and language" (BRITISH JOURNAL FOR THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE, Feb. 1953) discusses several dualisms occurring in philosophy, especially Mind and Matter. The position of a solipsism of pure idealism is possible, but only in private. A "social" idealism is impossible, since every situation involving communication introduces the fundamental dualism... Anton Neuheusler's review-article (in HOCHLAND, Oct. 1952) of recent works on the relation of science to philosophy and religion is a good critical source of information on recent material.

## RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

## 1.

*Beyond subjectivism.* The limitations of subjective principles of thought in philosophy, and of rules of conduct in ethics, have been well brought out in two recent works of collective authorship. In one, Dr. Ruth Nanda Anshen

has brought together forty essays on the fundamental nature of the moral life in its manifold theoretical and cultural expressions, and has arranged them in a tightly organized sequence. The theme is the unity and absolute character of moral values historically situated in the context of a cultural and religious pluralism. The essayists maintain a consistently high level, but we wish to single out Dr. Anshen's opening and closing articles, "Thou Shalt Not" and "Thou Art," which are inspiring statements, in paradoxical Scriptural language, of the moral perplexities that beset our age of anxiety. Of the other contributions let us note: MacIver, 'The Deep Beauty of the Golden Rule'; Jaspers, 'Nature and Ethics'; Maritain, 'Natural Law and Moral Law'; Jaeger, 'The Moral Value of Contemplation'; H. Richard Niebuhr, 'The Center of Value'; and the essays by Buber, D'Arcy, Jessup, Piaget, Sarton, Tillich, Schweitzer, Khalifa Abdul Hakim, etc. It might not be inappropriate to the intention and direction of the diverse meditations on man's ethical imperative—which run from a cultural and juridical inter-nationalism (Jessup, Linton), through a rational-philosophical universalism (Jaeger, von Fritz, Schweitzer) to the manifold commitments to 'absolute' and 'revealed' religions (D'Arcy, Tillich, Niebuhr, Hakim)—to take as the unifying theme that runs through this open dialogue Kurt von Fritz's 'Relative and Absolute Values.' In substance, it is the cogency of Platonic absolutes, ideas or archetypes as explanatory of the relative, visible and changing order of things that von Fritz presents as relevant evidence for an affirmation of the absolute character of moral principles in life. A concrete, historical, revealed center is not, it is true, entertained by von Fritz and several of the other authors, yet the need of a moral absolute that nevertheless would be related to historical contingency is the main preoccupation of the participating writers. It is in this precise respect, in the affirmation of the absolute that is within but not one with the relative, that the efforts of the authors are most significant, especially since the militant advocacy of absolute relativism and anti-supernaturalism (the term is that of Dewey) in two recent volumes, *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, edited by Krikorian, and *Philosophy for the Future, the quest of modern materialism*, edited by Sellar.

In *The Return to Reason* (Regnery) John Wild of Harvard University has published the contributions of a group of American philosophers who have united around a program to promote interest in and knowledge of realism in philosophy. The purpose of the Association for Realistic Philosophy is explicit enough: to restate, in a contemporary context of phenomenological inspiration, the cogency and necessity, for philosophical survival, of the great theses of classical realism, largely Aristotelian in derivation. Not all the essays display that sense of urgent relevance to the survival of metaphysics, nor for that matter a viable definition of metaphysics, that the Editor is so anxious to sustain. The range and nature of metaphysics is severely restricted by the argument that metaphysics is an empirical discipline, possessed of its distinctive protocols, to be sure, yet empirical both in origin and termination. Both Chapman and Wild, whose essays contain suggestive material on the structure and bearing of 'awareness' as an epistemological act immediately expressive of being, limit the idea of being to a cosmological dimension. Though Wild concludes with a schematic argument for the First Cause (largely inspired by van

Steenberghen) his treatment of the crucial metaphysical problem of coningency is deficient in the absence of that principle without which metaphysics and metaphysical knowledge could not be at all, the principle, namely, of analogy. William A. Banner's 'Natural Law and Social Order' is a well-argued statement of the necessity of a universal objective good over a multiplicity of private interests, and of the primacy, in natural right, of moral over historical content. Charles Malik's concluding essay, 'Natural Law and the Problems of Asia,' is an eloquent plea, delivered within the framework of universal human rights—ontologically and morally one, historically and culturally many—that the West display greater respect for the indigenous wisdom of the diverse Asian peoples instead of insisting exclusively on economic and technological pressures.

## 2.

*Natural Law.* The urgent insistence of world-opinion for a workable juridical organization of the society of sovereign states has aroused speculation about natural law as a possible theoretical support and guide for political action. An introductory exploration of the theoretical aspect of the problem will be found in John Wild's *Plato's Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law* (Chicago). In the first section of the book, Wild refutes the several and serious charges lodged against Plato by Karl Popper in *The Open Society and its Enemies*: vol. I, *The Spell of Plato*. Wild shows that Popper has completely mis-read Plato, and offers his own philosophical convictions for a valid historiography of philosophy. Popper's charges are that Plato is an enemy of freedom, of democracy, of philosophy (*sic*), in brief, a dogmatist obsessed with the dream of organizing society into a totalitarian state equipped with Inquisition and Secret Guards.

The central issue that Popper raises concerns the character and end of philosophy. Committed as he is to a militant logical positivism, and accepting, uncritically, the test of sensible verifiability as the norm of truth or meaningfulness, he is insensitive to philosophical exigencies which demand intelligibility or rational verifiability (not disconnected, to be sure, from sensible experience) as the norm of truth. Popper attacks Plato as the enemy of freedom, but his criticism is inadequate precisely because, in taking issue with Plato's conception of philosophy as wisdom expressive of an objective ontological and moral order, he cuts away the very ground on which Plato's philosophy, rightly or wrongly, stands. The conclusions of Wild's analysis of Popper serve as elements in the elaboration of a positive theory of natural law that is outlined in the second section of the book. Wild argues that Plato and not the Stoics founded the theory of natural law, at least in that basic form which he compresses into five principles through which nature is taken as "1—a normative world order, 2—the eidetic structure of concrete entities, 3—formally determined tendency, 4—the correct ordering of incipient tendency, 5—existential fulfilment."

Wild's book offers many valuable insights into Plato's quest for an objective ontological and moral order in the world of human experience, and presents a fresh view of process in Plato. The idea of natural law that emerges, however, is somewhat too formalistic, rationalized and apparently autonomous:

reference to the openness of natural law to trans-natural possibilities (never for a moment absent in Plato) should also have been made.

## 3.

Max Scheler, Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch are three outstanding figures in the development of the new social epistemology whose ideas were utilized by Mannheim in his early studies, recently published in English translation under the title, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, edited by Paul Kecskemeti (Oxford University Press, New York, 1953). The essays, written in the 20's, should be read as a prelude to Mannheim's later major work, *Ideology and Utopia*. Of the collected essays, "Dynamic Standards in Thought and Practise" seems the most relevant from the point of view of both the genetic and structural unity of Mannheim's thought. Moved by an uncriticized acceptance of a dichotomy between the absolute and the relative, the eternal and the historical, Mannheim's quest for a unifying principle to support his sociological insights into the historical process stops short of its potential and proper object. Mannheim disclaims relativism and insists on differentiating it from historicism. Though suggestive, this distinction is inadequate, for it forces upon us a kind of terminological *deus ex machina* in the form of a 'relationism' which signifies nothing closer to an absolute norm of truth than a perspectival vision presents: neither a relativism nor an absolutism, such an epistemology is, in Kecskemeti's words, 'nothing but an illusion.' Mannheim's brilliant insights into the unfinished character of history and the perennially approximative nature of human knowledge, inescapably conditioned as it is by socio-economic favors, do yield fresh knowledge of man-in-history. Yet, that this vision of the world as process constitutes an adequate expression of human experience and that it must exclude all reference to the trans-historical is an un-tested, and unwarranted assumption. How history, the sphere of the relative, and the Absolute, the source of the unchanging, can co-exist without mutual destruction has been worked out historically and theologically in the monumental work of Luigi Sturzo, 'sociologist of the supernatural,' in whose writings the truths uttered by Mannheim are retained but purified by the context of a sociology based on a human-divine content. Both those un-informed of Sturzo's work and those familiar with it will appreciate the recent contribution to Sturzian studies presented by the editors of *Thought* in "Luigi Sturzo, an anthology of his writings," edited and enriched by the illuminating comments of Robert C. Pollock (Summer, 1953). By studying the passages chosen by Pollock first, and turning to the integral texts later, one might very well understand how Mannheim's work asks to be completed by Sturzo.

## 4.

*Religion and the Decline of Capitalism* (Scribner's). Inspired by the sort of analysis of socio-economic structures situated within their proper theological setting that R. H. Tawney had followed in his now famous thesis, Canon V. A. Demant has contributed a lucid historical statement and an incisive socio-logical analysis of the movement of modern society towards a totalitarian immanence brought about, paradoxically, by the disruptive forces latent in the theoretical postulates of liberalism and capitalism.

## 5.

*Epistemology.* P. Hoenen has made a notable contribution to Thomistic epistemology in *Reality and Judgment according to St. Thomas* (Regnery). Through a detailed textual analysis of many scattered passages in the work of St. Thomas, Hoenen has reconstructed the theory of judgment with the context of a critical realism that is phenomenologically initiated and rationally validated. The inescapable existential reference of the judgment and its profound continuity with apprehension make up a theory of knowledge that is most relevant to contemporary epistemological discussions, oriented as they are to the concrete order of existence. Especially suggestive, though brief, is the rapprochement (not marriage, be it understood) between the Thomistic and the Cartesian *Cogito*, each fully existential in structure yet neither, perhaps, complete in itself.

## 6.

*Greek vs. Hebrew.* Claude Tresmontant has published a useful essay, *La pensée hébraïque* (Cerf), which studies the influence of Hebraic thought on the great philosophies. He develops the thesis of a fundamental divergence between Greek and Hebraic thought as to the value of the sensible world, and makes clear the philosophical importance of such an Hebraic notion as creation.

## 7.

*Apostles of Discord* (Beacon). Dr. Ralph E. Roy, a Methodist minister, has successfully executed "a factual account of the various groups and individuals, on the fringe of (American) Protestantism, which promote hate and disruption." The various anti-Semitic, anti-Negro and anti-Catholic groups are seen as justifying their activities in religious terms. Under "apostles of disruption" Roy classes saboteurs of the ecumenical movement, ultra-fundamentalist crusaders against "modernists," Communist agents and fellow-travelers, and ultra-"conservative" extremists preaching a gospel of "libertarian" economic and isolationist politics.

## 8.

*Dimensions de la foi* (Cerf). M-L Guérard des Lauriers, O.P. has probably made the most detailed study yet published of the epistemological structure of faith; its status, its conditions of true knowledge, its place in the spiritual activity by which man is completed (in God). There is a relentless effort at precision, done with complete familiarity with the science of theology and its sources, and completely at home and convincing when touching on the spiritual life as such.

## 9.

*Moral dilemmas.* Gerald Vann, O.P. inaugurated a series of articles under this title in the September **BLACKFRIARS**, the first of which has already been reprinted in **THE CATHOLIC WORKER**. Father Vann avoids both clever casuistry and purely legalistic "solutions"; his is a voice one waits to hear in the confessional.

## 10.

*A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (Nelson). Under the editorship of Dom B. Orchard, OSB, Fr. E. F. Sutcliffe, S.J., Rev. R. Fuller, and Dom R. Russell, O.S.B., this volume would seem to be the most authoritative and complete reference work on the Bible and under Catholic auspices yet published in English. Most helpful are the preliminary general articles on the place held by the Bible in the Church, the meaning of inspiration and inerrancy, modes of interpretation and criticism, and on the literary characteristics of the Bible.

## 11.

*Meditation sur l'Eglise* (Aubier). Chapters of Father De Lubac's latest book have already appeared in *LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* and *SOCIAL ORDER*, and the work is sure to find an English-language publisher shortly. It is not so much the fruit of a theologian's study as the result of meditation by a member of the faithful.

For example, in a chapter on the spiritual pitfalls to be avoided by those who love the Church but see her in need of some sort of reform, De Lubac sees that they must first have confidence in the Church as their Mother, and remember that she is the community of all believers, not an exclusive club. While serving the Church, one must avoid making her a tool or one's own cause, and must not think of her as bound to one's own cultural, artistic and intellectual likes and dislikes. Criticism must not be bitter, but capable of purifying and enriching its object.

An attitude of absolute commitment to success is an impossible approach to the problem of accommodation to the times. The Church's "success" is the hidden path of sanctification. As God has chosen the weak to confound the strong, the Church is meant also for the mediocre and the dull.

## 12.

*Archeology and Religion*. Princeton Press has published Professor Jack Finegan's large summary of the archeological backgrounds of several of the religions of the East. *The Archeology of World Religion* is the somewhat over-inclusive title of this companion volume to *Light from the Ancient Past*. Its generous quotations and illustrations make this one of the more interesting introductions to the still too little known field of Eastern religion. Included is an exposition of Confucianism, and a chapter on "primitive religion," contemporary and pre-historic. It is unfortunate that in this latter, necessarily more speculative section, no use was made of Miss Levy's *Gate of Horn*.

## 13.

*Also noted.* Newman Press has issued here a two volume English translation, printed in Belgium by Declée, of the French collaborative manual *Initiation Biblique*, first published in 1939. This valuable handbook, edited by A. Robert and A. Tricot, has been brought up to date bibliographically, and called *Guide to the Bible*. Those seeking a detailed treatment of Genesis would

do better to consult the *Dictionnaire Théologique*, but there is included here the important letter of 1948 to Cardinal Suhard from the Biblical Commission on the sources of the Pentateuch and the historicity of the first eleven chapters of Genesis. On the whole, the various collaborators have adopted, in the words of one of the co-editors, "a prudent but confident attitude" towards the wide variety of perplexing problems involved in such an undertaking. A much less elaborate presentation of many of these can be found in an expanded pamphlet by H. St. J. Hart called *A Foreword to the Old Testament: An Essay of Elementary Introduction* (Oxford), in which problems are solved according to the Wellhausen hypothesis.

The East and West Library, London, has printed selections from Moses Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* in its *Philosophia Judaica* series, which now includes similar volumes from Philo, Saadya Gaon, Jehuda Halevi, Ahad Ha-am, and Solomon Schechter. Chaim Rubin has made the translation from the Arabic, and there is a brief introduction and commentary by Julius Guttmann. It is pleasant to think that interest in this handsome little volume may lead to the publication of a complete translation from such competent hands, so that this urbane and influential philosopher may again become known among Christians.

Dr. Walter Lowrie's *Action in the Liturgy* (Philosophical Library) is a collection of stimulating occasional pieces on essential action in the liturgy and "important non-essentials." The articles are characterized by honesty, zest and an invigorating sincerity, though there will be very few of any communion who will subscribe completely either to his analysis or his esthetic preferences. All who care seriously for the liturgy will find these essays rewarding.

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